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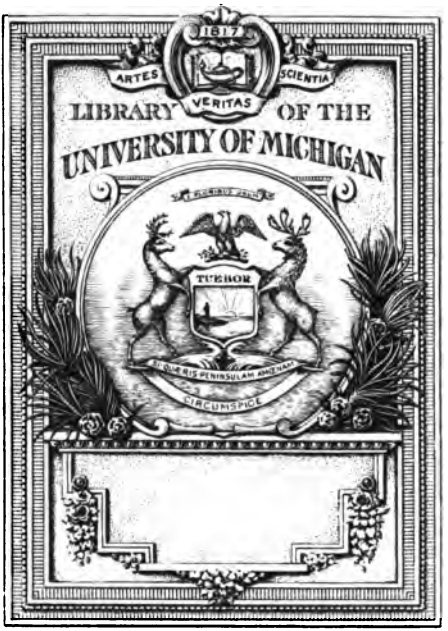
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LETTERS

WRITTEN IN

FRANCE,

IN THE SUMMER 1790,

TO A

FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

LETTERS

WRITTEN IN

FRANCE,

IN THE SUMMER 1790,

TO A

FRIEND IN ENGLAND:

CONTAINING

VARIOUS ANECDOTES

RELATIVE TO THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION;

AND

MEMOIRS

OF

MONS. AND MADAME DU F——.

BY

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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LETTERS

FROM

FRANCE.

LETTER I.

I ARRIVED at Paris, by a very rapid journey, the day before the Federation; and when I am diſpoſed to murmur at the evils of my deſtiny, I ſhall henceforth put this piece of good fortune into the oppoſite ſcale, and reflect how many diſappointments it ought to counterbalance. Had the packet which conveyed me from Brighton to Dieppe ſailed a few hours later; had the wind been contrary; in ſhort, had I not reached Paris at the moment I did reach it, I ſhould

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the ſpot where the King was ſeated. In the middle of the Champ de Mars *l'Autel de la Patrie* was placed, on which incenſe was burnt by prieſts dreſſed in long white robes, with ſaſhes of national ribbon. Several inſcriptions were written on the altar; but the words viſible at the greateſt diſtance were, " La Nation, la Loi, & le Roi*."

At the lower end of the amphitheatre, oppoſite to the pavilion, three triumphal arches were erected, adorned with emblems and allegorical figures.

The proceſſion marched to the Champ de Mars, through the central ſtreets of Paris. At La Place de Louis Quinze, the eſcorts, who carried the colours, received under their banners, ranged in two lines, the National Aſſembly, who came from the Tuilleries. When the proceſſion paſſed the ſtreet where Henry the Fourth was aſſaſſinated, every man pauſed

* The Nation, the Law, and the King.

pauſed as if by general conſent: the cries of joy were ſuſpended, and ſucceeded by a ſolemn ſilence. This tribute of regret, paid from the ſudden impulſe of feeling at ſuch a moment, was perhaps the moſt honourable teſtimony to the virtues of that amiable Prince which his memory has yet received.

In the ſtreets, at the windows, and on the roofs of the houſes, the people, tranſported with joy, ſhouted and wept as the proceſſion paſſed. Old men were ſeen kneeling in the ſtreets, bleſſing God that they had lived to witneſs that happy moment. The people ran to the doors of their houſes, loaded with refreſhments, which they offered to the troops; and crowds of women ſurrounded the ſoldiers, and holding up their infants in their arms, and melting into tears, promiſed to make their children imbibe, from their earlieſt age, an inviolable

olable attachment to the principles of the new conſtitution.

The proceſſion entered the Champ de Mars by a long road, which thouſands of people had aſſiſted in forming, by filling up deep hollows, levelling the riſing grounds, and erecting a temporary bridge acroſs the Seine, oppoſite to the triumphal arches. The order of the proceſſion was as follows;

A troop of horſe, with trumpets.
A great band of muſic.
A detachment of grenadiers.
The electors choſen at Paris in 1789.
A band of volunteers.
The aſſembly of the repreſentatives of the people.
The military committee.
Company of chaſſeurs.
A band of drums.
The Preſidents of ſixty diſtricts.
The Deputies of the people ſent to the Federation.

The

The Adminiſtrators of the Municipality.

Bands of muſic and drums.

Battalion of children, carrying a ſtandard, on which was written, *L'Eſpérance de la Patrie**.

Detachment with the colours of the national guard of Paris.

Battalion of veterans.

Deputies from forty-two departments, arranged alphabetically.

The Oriflamme, or grand ſtandard of the Kings of France.

Deputies from the regular troops.

Deputies from the navy.

Deputies from forty-one departments, arranged alſo alphabetically.

Band of volunteer chaſſeurs.

Troop of horſe, with trumpets.

The proceſſion, which was formed with eight perſons abreaſt, entered the Champ de Mars beneath the triumphal arches,

* The Hope of the Country.

with a diſcharge of cannon. The deputies placed themſelves round the inſide of the amphitheatre. Between them and the ſeats of the ſpectators, the national guard of Paris were ranged; and the ſeats round the amphitheatre were filled with four hundred thouſand people. The middle of the amphitheatre was crowded with an immenſe multitude of ſoldiers. The National Aſſembly walked towards the pavilion, where they placed themſelves with the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, and their attendants; and oppoſite this group, roſe in perſpective the hills of Paſſy and Chaillot, covered with people. The ſtandards, of which one was preſented to each department of the kingdom, as a mark of brotherhood, by the citizens of Paris, were carried to the altar, to be conſecrated by the biſhop. High maſs was performed, after which Monſ. de la Fayette, who had been appointed by the King Major-General

neral of the Federation, aſcended the altar, gave the ſignal, and himſelf took the national oath. In an inſtant every ſword was drawn, and every arm lifted up. The King pronounced the oath, which the Preſident of the National Aſſembly repeated, and the ſolemn words were re-echoed by ſix hundred thouſand voices; while the Queen raiſed the Dauphin in her arms, ſhewing him to the people and the army. At the moment the conſecrated banners were diſplayed, the ſun, which had been obſcured by frequent ſhowers in the courſe of the morning, burſt forth; while the people lifted their eyes to heaven, and called upon the Deity to look down and witneſs the ſacred engagement into which they entered. A reſpectful ſilence was ſucceeded by the cries, the ſhouts, the acclamations of the multitude: they wept, they embraced each other, and then diſperſed.

You will not ſuſpect that I was an indifferent

different witneſs of ſuch a ſcene. Oh, no! this was not a time in which the diſtinctions of country were remembered. It was the triumph of human kind; it was man aſſerting the nobleſt privilege of his nature; and it required but the common feelings of humanity, to become in that moment a citizen of the world. For myſelf, I acknowledge that my heart caught with enthuſiaſm the general ſympathy; my eyes were filled with tears: and I ſhall never forget the ſenſations of that day; "while memory "holds her ſeat in my boſom."

The weather proved very unfavourable during the morning of the Federation; but the minds of people were too much elevated by ideas of moral good, to attend to the phyſical evils of the day. Several heavy ſhowers were far from interrupting the general gaiety. The people, when drenched by the rain, called out, with exultation, rather than regret, *"Nous ſommes

* We are wet for the nation.

ſommes mouillés à la nation." Some exclaimed, *" La révolution Françoiſe eſt cimenté avec de l'eau, au lieu de ſang." The national guard, during the hours which preceded the arrival of the proceſſion, amuſed the ſpectators †*d'une dance ronde*, and with a thouſand whimſical and playful evolutions, highly expreſſive of that gaiety which diſtinguiſhes the French character. I believe none but Frenchmen would have diverted themſelves, and half a million of people, who were waiting in expectation of a ſcene the moſt ſolemn upon record, by circles of ten thouſand men galloping ‡*en dance ronde*. But if you are diſpoſed to think of this gaiety with the contempt of ſuperior gravity, for I will not call it wiſdom, recollect that theſe dancers were the very men whoſe bravery formed the great epocha of French

* The French revolution is cemented with water, inſtead of blood.

† With dancing in a circle. ‡ In the round dance.

French liberty; the heroes who demoliſhed the towers of the Baſtille, and whoſe fame will deſcend to the lateſt poſterity.

Such was the admirable order with which this auguſt ſpectacle was conducted, that no accident interrupted the univerſal feſtivity. All carriages were forbidden during that day, and the entrances to the Champ de Mars were ſo numerous, that half a million of people were collected together without a crowd.

The people had only one ſubject of regret; they murmured that the King had taken the national oath in the pavilion, inſtead of performing that ceremony at the foot of the altar; and ſome of them, crowding round Monſ. de la Fayette, conjured him to perſuade the King to go to the altar, and take the oath a ſecond time. *" Mes enfans," ſaid Monſ. de la Fayette, " le ſerment n'eſt pas une ariette, on ne peut pas le jouer deux fois." Monſ.

* My friends, the oath is not an air which can be played twice over.

Monſ. de la Fayette, after the Federation, went to the Château de la Muette, where a public dinner was prepared for the national guard. An immenſe crowd gathered round him when he alighted from his horſe, at a little diſtance from the château; and ſome Ariſtocrates, mixing themſelves with the true worſhippers of him who is ſo juſtly the idol of the French nation, attempted to ſtifle him with their embraces. He called out, "**Mais, mes amis, vous m'étouffez!*" and one of his *aides de camp*, who perceived the danger of his general, threw himſelf from his horſe, which he entreated Monſ. de la Fayette to mount. He did ſo, and haſtened to the château.

This incident reminds me of a line in Racine's fine tragedy of Britannicus, where Nero ſays,

† "J'embraſſe mon rival, mais c'eſt pour l'étouffer"

Adieu.

* But, my friends, you ſtifle me.

† I embrace my rival, but it is to deſtroy him.

LETTER III.

THE rejoicings at Paris did not terminate with the ceremony of the Federation. A ſucceſſion of entertainments, which laſted ſeveral days, were prepared for the deputies from the provinces, who were all quartered in the houſes of the bourgeois, where they were received with the moſt cordial hoſpitality.

The night of the 14th of July the whole city of Paris was illuminated; and the next day *le ci-devant Duc*, now Monſ. d'Orleans, gave a public dinner to the national guard in the hall of the Palais Royal. We walked in the evening round the gallery, from which we ſaw part of the crowd below amuſing themſelves by dancing, while others were ſinging in chorus the favourite national ſongs.

On

On the following Sunday the national guards were reviewed by Monſ. de la Fayette in the Champ de Mars, which was again filled with ſpectators, and the people appeared more enthuſiaſtic than ever in their applauſes of their general. The Champ de Mars reſounded with repeated cries of * "Vive Monſ. de la "Fayette! On this day carriages were again forbidden, and the evening diſplayed a ſcene of general rejoicing. The whole city was illuminated, and crowds of company filled the gardens of the Tuilleries, from which we ſaw the beautiful *façade* of the Louvre lighted in the moſt ſplendid manner. In the Champs Elyſées, where a fête was given to the Deputies, innumerable lamps were hung from one row of trees to another, and ſhed the moſt agreeable brilliance on thoſe enchanting walks; where the

* Long live Monſ. de la Fayette.

the exhilarated crowd danced and ſung, and filled the air with the ſound of rejoicing. Several parties of the national guard came from the Champs Elyſées, dancing along the walks of the Tuilleries with a woman between every two men; and all the prieſts whom they met in their way, they obliged to join in the dance, treating them as women, by placing them between two ſoldiers, and ſometimes ſportively dreſſing them in grenadiers caps. Fireworks of great variety and beauty were exhibited on the Pont Neuf; and the ſtatue of Henry the Fourth was decorated with the ornament of all others the moſt dear in the eyes of the people, a ſcarf of national ribbon. Tranſparencies of Monſ. de la Fayette and Monſ. Bailly were placed, as the higheſt mark of public favour, on each ſide of this revered ſtatue.

But

But the ſpectacle of all others the moſt intereſting to my feelings, was the rejoicings at the Baſtille. The ruins of that execrable fortreſs were ſuddenly transformed, as if with the wand of necromancy, into a ſcene of beauty and of pleaſure. The ground was covered with freſh clods of graſs, upon which young trees were placed in rows, and illuminated with a blaze of light. Here the minds of the people took a higher tone of exultation than in the other ſcenes of feſtivity. Their mutual congratulations, their reflections on the horror of the paſt, their ſenſe of preſent felicity, their cries of * "Vive la Nation," ſtill ring in my ear! I too, though but a ſojourner in their land, rejoiced in their happineſs, joined the univerſal voice, and repeated with all my heart and ſoul, "Vive la nation!"

LETTER

* Long live the Nation.

LETTER IV.

BEFORE I ſuffered my friends at Paris to conduct me through the uſual routine of convents, churches, and palaces, I requeſted to viſit the Baſtille; feeling a much ſtronger deſire to contemplate the ruins of that building than the moſt perfect edifices of Paris. When we got into the carriage, our French ſervant called to the coachman, with an air of triumph, *"A la Baſtille—mais nous n'y "reſterons pas." We drove under that porch which ſo many wretches have entered never to repaſs, and, alighting from the carriage, deſcended with difficulty into the dungeons, which were too low to admit of our ſtanding upright, and ſo dark that we were obliged at noon-day to viſit them with the light of a candle. We ſaw the hooks of thoſe chains

* To the Baſtille—but we ſhall not remain there.

chains by which the priſoners were faſtened round the neck, to the walls of their cells; many of which, being below the level of the water, are in a conſtant ſtate of humidity; and a noxious vapour iſſued from them, which more than once extinguiſhed the candle, and was ſo inſufferable that it required a ſtrong ſpirit of curioſity to tempt one to enter. Good God!—and to theſe regions of horror were human creatures dragged at the caprice of deſpotic power. What a melancholy conſideration, that

——— "Man! proud man,
Dreſt in a little brief authority,
Plays ſuch fantaſtic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep."

There appears to be a greater number of theſe dungeons than one could have imagined the hard heart of tyranny itſelf would contrive; for, ſince the deſtruction of the building, many ſubterraneous cells have been diſcovered underneath a piece of ground which was incloſed within

within the walls of the Baſtille, but which ſeemed a bank of ſolid earth before the horrid ſecrets of this priſon-houſe were diſcloſed. Some ſkeletons were found in theſe receſſes, with irons ſtill faſtened on their decaying bones.

After having viſited the Baſtille, we may indeed be ſurpriſed, that a nation ſo enlightened as the French, ſubmitted ſo long to the oppreſſions of their government; but we muſt ceaſe to wonder that their indignant ſpirits at length ſhook off the galling yoke.

Thoſe who have contemplated the dungeons of the Baſtille, without rejoicing in the French revolution, may, for aught I know, be very reſpectable perſons, and very agreeable companions in the hours of proſperity; but, if my heart were ſinking with anguiſh, I ſhould not fly to thoſe perſons for conſolation. Sterne ſays, that a man is incapable of loving one woman

as

as he ought, who has not a ſort of an affection for the whole ſex; and as little ſhould I look for particular ſympathy from thoſe who have no feelings of general philanthropy. If the ſplendor of a deſpotic throne can only ſhine like the radiance of lightning, while all around is involved in gloom and horror, in the name of heaven let its baleful luſtre be extinguiſhed for ever. May no ſuch ſtrong contraſt of light and ſhade again exiſt in the political ſyſtem of France! but may the beams of liberty, like the beams of day, ſhed their benign influence on the cottage of the peaſant, as well as on the palace of the monarch! May Liberty, which for ſo many ages paſt has taken pleaſure in ſoftening the evils of the bleak and rugged climates of the North, in fertilizing a barren ſoil, in clearing the ſwamp, in lifting mounds againſt the inundations of the tempeſt, diffuſe her bleſſings alſo on the genial land of France, and bid the huſband-

man rejoice under the ſhade of the olive and the vine!

The Baſtille, which Henry the Fourth and his veteran troops aſſailed in vain, the citizens of Paris had the glory of taking in a few hours. The avarice of Monſ. de Launay had tempted him to guard this fortreſs with only half the complement of men ordered by Government; and a letter which he received the morning of the 14th of July, commanding him to ſuſtain the ſiege till the evening, when ſuccour would arrive, joined to his own treachery towards the aſſailants, coſt him his life.

The courage of the beſiegers was inflamed by the horrors of famine, there being at this time only twenty-four hours proviſion of bread in Paris. For ſome days the people had aſſembled in crowds round the ſhops of the bakers, who were obliged to have a guard of ſoldiers to protect them from the famiſhed multitude; while the women, ren-

rendered furious by want, cried, in the reſolute tone of deſpair, * " Il nous faut du pain pour nos enfans." Such was the ſcarcity of bread, that a French gentleman told me, that, the day preceding the taking of the Baſtille, he was invited to dine with a *Négociant*; and, when he went, was informed that a ſervant had been out five hours in ſearch of bread, and had at laſt been able to purchaſe only one loaf.

It was at this criſis, it was to ſave themſelves the ſhocking ſpectacle of their wives and infants periſhing before their eyes, that the citizens of Paris flew to arms; and, impelled by ſuch cauſes, fought with the daring intrepidity of men who had all that renders life of any value at ſtake, and who determined to die or conquer. The women too, far from indulging the fears incident to our feeble ſex, in defiance of the cannon of

* We muſt have bread for our children.

the Baſtille, ventured to bring victuals to their ſons and huſbands; and, with a ſpirit worthy of Roman matrons, encouraged them to go on. Women mounted guard in the ſtreets, and, when any perſon paſſed, called out boldly, * "Qui va là?"

A gentleman, who had the command of fifty men in this enterpriſe, told me, that one of his ſoldiers being killed by a cannon-ball, the people, with great marks of indignation, removed the corpſe, and then, ſnatching up the dead man's hat, begged money of the byſtanders for his interment, in a manner characteriſtic enough of that gaiety which never forſakes the French, even on ſuch occaſions as would make any other people on earth ſerious. † "Madame, pour ce pauvre diable qui s'eſt fait

* Who goes there?

† Madam, for this poor devil, who has been killed for the Nation!—Sir, for this unfortunate dog, who has been killed for the Nation!

fait tuer pour la Nation!—Monſieur, pour ce pauvre chien qui s'eſt fait tuer pour la Nation!" This mode of ſupplication, though not very pathetic, obtained the end deſired; no perſon being ſufficiently obdurate to reſiſt the powerful plea, * " qu'il s'eſt fait tuer pour la Nation!"

When the Baſtille was taken, and the old man, of whom you have, no doubt, heard, and who had been confined in a dungeon thirty-five years, was brought into day-light, which had not for ſo long a ſpace of time viſited his eyes, he ſtaggered, ſhook his white beard, and cried faintly, †" Meſſieurs, vous m'avez rendu un grand ſervice, rendez-m'en un autre; tuez-moi! je ne ſais pas où aller."—" Allons, allons," the crowd anſwered

* Had been killed for the Nation.

† Gentlemen, you have rendered me one great ſervice; render me another—kill me! for I know not where to go.—Come along, come along; the Nation will provide for you.

with one voice, " la Nation te nourrira."

As the heroes of the Baſtille paſſed along the ſtreets after its ſurrender, the citizens ſtood at the doors of their houſes, loaded with wine, brandy, and other refreſhments, which they offered to theſe deliverers of their country; but they unanimouſly refuſed to taſte any ſtrong liquors, conſidering the great work they had undertaken, as not yet accompliſhed, and being determined to watch the whole night, in caſe of any ſurpriſe.

All thoſe who had aſſiſted in taking the Baſtille, were preſented by the Municipality of Paris, with a ribbon of the national colours; on which is ſtamped, incloſed in a circle of braſs, an impreſſion of the Baſtille, and which is worn as a military order.

The Municipality of Paris alſo propoſed a ſolemn funeral proceſſion, in memory

memory of thoſe who loſt their lives in this enterpriſe; but, on making application to the National Aſſembly for a deputation of its members to aſſiſt at this ſolemnity, the Aſſembly were of opinion that theſe funeral honours ſhould be poſtponed till a more favourable moment, as they might at preſent have a tendency to inflame the minds of the people.

I have heard ſeveral perſons mention a young man, of a little inſignificant figure, who, the day before the Baſtille was taken, got up on a chair in the Palais Royal, and harangued the multitude, conjuring them to make a ſtruggle for their liberty, and aſſerting, that now the moment was arrived. They liſtened to his eloquence with the moſt eager attention; and, when he had inſtructed as many as could hear him at one time, he requeſted them to depart, and repeated his harangue to a new ſet of auditors.

Among the dungeons of the Baſtille, are placed, upon a heap of ſtones, the figures of the two men who contrived the plan of this fortreſs, where they were afterwards confined for life. Theſe men are repreſented chained to the wall, and are beheld without any emotion of ſympathy.

The perſon employed to remove the ruins of the Baſtille, has framed of the ſtones eighty-three complete models of this building, which, with a true patriotic ſpirit, he has preſented to the eighty-three departments of the kingdom, by way of hint to his countrymen to take care of their liberties in future.

LETTER

LETTER V.

I AM juſt returned from a viſit to Madame Sillery, whoſe works on education are ſo well known and ſo juſtly eſteemed in England, and who received me with the moſt engaging politeneſs. Surely the French are unrivalled in the arts of pleaſing; in the power of uniting with the moſt poliſhed elegance of manners, that attentive kindneſs which ſeems to flow warm from the heart, and which, while it ſoothes our vanity, ſecures our affections. Madame Sillery and her pupils are at preſent at St. Leu, a beautiful ſpot in the rich valley of Montmorenci. Monſ. d'Orleans has certainly conferred a moſt eſſential obligation upon his children, by placing them under the care of this lady. I never met with young people more amiable in their diſpoſitions, or more charming in their

manners, which are equally remote from arrogance, and from thoſe efforts of condeſcenſion which I have ſeen ſome great people make, with much difficulty to themſelves, and much offence to others. The Princeſs, who is thirteen years of age, has a countenance of the ſweeteſt expreſſion, and appears to me to be Adelaide, the heroine of Madame Sillery's Letters on Education, perſonified. The three Princes, though under Madame Sillery's ſuperintendence, have alſo preceptors who live in the houſe, and aſſiſt in their education. The eldeſt Prince, Monſ. de Chartres, is nearly eighteen years of age, and his attentive politeneſs formed a ſtriking contraſt, in my mind, to the manners of thoſe faſhionable gentlemen in a certain great metropolis, who conſider apathy and negligence as the teſt of good-breeding. But if I was pleaſed with the manners of this young Prince, I was ſtill more

delighted

delighted to find him a confirmed friend to the new conſtitution of France, and willing, with the enthuſiaſm of a young and ardent mind, to renounce the ſplendor of his titles for the general good. When he heard that the ſacrifice of fortune alſo was required, and that the immenſe property which he had been taught to conſider as his inheritance, was to be divided with his brothers, he embraced them with the utmoſt affection, declaring that he ſhould rejoice in ſuch a diviſion. To find a democratic Prince, was ſomewhat ſingular: I was much leſs ſurpriſed that Madame Sillery had adopted ſentiments which are ſo congenial to an enlarged and comprehenſive mind. This lady I have called Sillery, becauſe it is the name by which ſhe is known in England; but, ſince the decree of the National Aſſembly, aboliſhing the nobility, ſhe has renounced with her title the name

of Sillery, and has taken that of Brulart.

She talked to me of the diſtinctions of rank, in the ſpirit of philoſophy, and ridiculed the abſurdity of converting the rewards of perſonal merit into the inheritance of thoſe who had perhaps ſo little claim to honours, that they were a ſort of oblique reproach on their character and conduct. There may be arguments againſt hereditary rank ſufficiently convincing to ſuch an underſtanding as Madame Brulart's: but I know ſome French ladies who entertain very different notions on this ſubject; who ſee no impropriety in the eſtabliſhments of nobility; and who have carried their love of ariſtocratical rights ſo far as to keep their beds in a fit of deſpondency, upon being obliged to relinquiſh the agreeable epithets of Comteſſe or Marquiſe, to which their ears had been ſo long accuſtomed.

But

But let me do juſtice to the ladies of France. The number of thoſe who have murmured at the loſs of rank, bears a very ſmall proportion to thoſe who have acted with a ſpirit of diſtinguiſhed patriotiſm; who, with thoſe generous affections which belong to the female heart, have gloried in ſacrificing titles, fortune, and even the perſonal ornaments, ſo dear to female vanity, for the common cauſe. It was the ladies who gave the example of *le don patriotique**, by offering their jewels at the ſhrine of Liberty; and if the women of ancient Rome have gained the applauſe of diſtant ages for ſuch actions, the women of France will alſo claim the admiration of poſterity.

The women have certainly had a conſiderable ſhare in the French revolution: for, whatever the imperious lords of the creation may fancy, the moſt important events

* The patriotic donation.

events which take place in this world depend a little on our influence; and we often act in human affairs like thoſe ſecret ſprings in mechaniſm, by which, though inviſible, great movements are regulated.

But let us return to Madame Brulart, who wears at her breaſt a medallion made of a ſtone of the Baſtille poliſhed. In the middle of the medallion, *Liberté* was written in diamonds; above was marked, in diamonds, the planet that ſhone on the 14th of July; and below was ſeen the moon, of the ſize ſhe appeared that memorable night. The medallion was ſet in a branch of laurel, compoſed of emeralds, and tied at the top with the national cockade, formed of brilliant ſtones of the three national colours.

Our converſation on the ſubject of the Baſtille, led Madame Brulart to relate an action of Monſ. de Chartres, which

which reflects the higheſt honour on his humanity. Being in Normandy, he viſited Mont St. Michel, a fortreſs built on a rock which ſtands a league and a half from the coaſt of Normandy. The tide covers this ſpace twice every twenty-four hours; but when it is low water, a perſon can paſs over on foot. Mont St. Michel was originally a church, founded by a good biſhop in the ſeventh century, in honour of St. Michel, who, it ſeems, appeared to him in a viſion on this ſpot. Richard, the firſt Duke of Normandy of that name, afterwards converted the church into an abbey; and this abbey gave riſe to the military order *des Chevaliers de St. Michel*, inſtituted by Louis the Eleventh. After having ſeen the precious relics of the abbey, the ſquare buckler, and the ſhort ſword found in Ireland near the body of the well-known dragon, whoſe deſtruction is attributed to the

the proweſs of St. Michel, Monſ. de Chartres was conducted, through many labyrinths, to the ſubterraneous parts of the edifice; where he was ſhewn a wooden cage, which was made by order of Louis the Fourteenth, for the puniſhment of an unfortunate wit, who had dared to ridicule his conqueſts in Holland, no ſooner gained than loſt. Monſ. de Chartres beheld with horror this inſtrument of tyranny, in which priſoners were ſtill frequently confined; and, expreſſing in very ſtrong terms his indignation, he was told, that, as a prince of the blood, he had a right, if he thought proper, to order the cage to be deſtroyed. Scarcely were the words pronounced, when the young Prince ſeized a hatchet, gave the firſt ſtroke himſelf to this execrable machine, waited to ſee it levelled with the ground, and thus may claim the glory of having, even before the demolition

of

of the Baſtille, begun the French revolution.

We found at St. Leu a young Engliſh lady, who is the companion of the Princeſs, and whoſe appearance is calculated to give the moſt favourable idea of Engliſh beauty. I never ſaw more regular features, or an expreſſion of countenance more lovely: and Madame Brulart, by whom ſhe has been educated, aſſured me that "the mind keeps the promiſe we had from the face." This young lady talked of her own country with a glow of ſatisfaction very grateful to my feelings. She ſeems to

"Caſt a look where England's glories ſhine,
"And bids her boſom ſympathiſe with mine."

LETTER

LETTER VI.

I HAVE been at the National Aſſembly, where, at a time when the deputies from the provinces engroſſed every ticket of admiſſion, my ſiſter and I were admitted without tickets, by the gentleman who had the command of the guard, and placed in the beſt ſeats, before he ſuffered the doors to be opened to other people. We had no perſonal acquaintance with this gentleman, or any claim to his politeneſs, except that of being foreigners and women; but theſe are, of all claims, the moſt powerful to the urbanity of French manners.

My ſiſter obſerved to me, that our ſeats, which were immediately oppoſite the tribune from which the members ſpeak, reminded her of our ſtruggles to attain the ſame ſituation in Weſtminſter Hall. But you muſt recollect, I anſwered,

ſwered, that we have attained this ſituation without any ſtruggle. I believe, however, that if the fame of Mr. Fox's eloquence ſhould lead a French woman to preſent herſelf at the door of Weſtminſter Hall without a ticket, ſhe might ſtand there as long as Mr. Haſtings's trial has laſted, without being permitted ſo paſs the barrier.

The hall of the National Aſſembly is long and narrow; at each end there is a gallery, where the common people are admitted by applying very early in the morning for numbers, which are diſtributed at the door; and the perſons who firſt apply ſecure the firſt numbers. The ſeats being alſo numbered, all confuſion and diſorder are prevented. The galleries at the ſide of the hall are divided into boxes, which are called tribunes; they belong to the principal members of the National Aſſembly; and to theſe places company are admitted with

with tickets. Rows of ſeats are placed round the hall, raiſed one above another, where the members of the Aſſembly are ſeated; and immediately oppoſite the chair of the Preſident, in the narrow part of the hall, is the tribune which the Members aſcend when they are going to ſpeak. One capital ſubject of debate in this Aſſembly is, who ſhall ſpeak firſt; for all ſeem more inclined to talk than to liſten; and ſometimes the Preſident in vain rings a bell, or with the vehemence of French action ſtretches out his arms, and endeavours to impoſe ſilence; while the ſix Huiſſiers, perſons who are appointed to keep order, make the attempt with as little ſucceſs as the Preſident himſelf. But one ceaſes to wonder that the meetings of the National Aſſembly are tumultuous, on reflecting how important are the objects of its deliberations. Not only the lives and fortunes of individuals, but the exiſtence of

the

the country is at ſtake: and of how little conſequence is this impetuoſity in debate, if the decrees which are paſſed are wiſe and beneficial, and the new conſtitution ariſes, like the beauty and order of nature, from the confuſion of mingled elements! I heard ſeveral of the Members ſpeak; but I am ſo little qualified to judge of oratory, that, without preſuming to determine whether I had reaſon to be entertained or not, I ſhall only tell you that I was ſo.

And this, repeated I with exultation to myſelf, this is the National Aſſembly of France! Thoſe men now before my eyes are the men who engroſs the attention, the aſtoniſhment of Europe; for the iſſue of whoſe decrees ſurrounding nations wait in ſuſpenſe, and whoſe fame has already extended through every civilized region of the globe: the men whoſe magnanimity inveſted them with power to deſtroy the old conſtitution, and whoſe wiſdom is erecting the new,

on

on a principle of perfection which has hitherto been thought chimerical, and has only ſerved to adorn the page of the philoſopher; but which they believe may be reduced to practice, and have therefore the courage to attempt. My mind, with a ſenſation of elevated pleaſure, paſſing through the interval of ages, anticipated the increaſing renown of theſe legiſlators, and the period when, all the nations of Europe following the liberal ſyſtem which France has adopted, the little crooked policy of the preſent times ſhall give place to the reign of reaſon, virtue, and ſcience.

The moſt celebrated characters in the National Aſſembly were pointed out to us. Monſieur Barnave de Dauphine, who is only ſix and twenty years of age, and the youngeſt member of the Aſſembly, is eſteemed its firſt orator, and is the leader of the democratic party. I believe Monſ. Barnave does not owe all his reputation

putation to his talents, however diſtinguiſhed: his virtues alſo claim a conſiderable ſhare of that applauſe which he receives from his country. He has ſhewn himſelf as ſtedfaſt in principle, as he is eloquent in debate. With firm undeviating integrity he has defended the cauſe of the people. Every motion he has made in the Aſſembly has paſſed into a law, becauſe its beneficial tendency has been always evident; and it was he who effected that memorable decree which deprived the King of the right of making war, without the conſent of the nation. Monſ. Barnave is adored by the people; who have two or three times taken the horſes from his carriage, and drawn him in triumph along the ſtreets of Paris.

We alſo ſaw Monſ. Mirabeau l'aîné, whoſe genius is of the firſt claſs, but who poſſeſſes a very ſmall ſhare of popularity. I am, however, one of his partiſans, though not merely from that enthuſiaſm which

which always comes acroſs my heart in favour of great intellectual abilities. Monſ. Mirabeau has another very powerful claim on my partiality: he is the profeſſed friend (and I muſt and will love him for being ſo) of the African race. He has propoſed the abolition of the ſlave-trade to the National Aſſembly; and, though the Aſſembly have delayed the conſideration of this ſubject, on account of thoſe deliberations which immediately affect the country, yet, perhaps, if our ſenators continue to doze over this affair as they have hitherto done, the French will have the glory of ſetting us an example, which it will then be our humble employment to follow. But I truſt the period will never come, when England will ſubmit to be taught by another nation the leſſon of humanity. I truſt an Engliſh Houſe of Commons will never perſiſt in thinking, that what is morally wrong,

wrong, can be politically right; that the virtue and the proſperity of a people are things at variance with each other; and that a country which abounds with ſo many ſources of wealth, cannot afford to cloſe one polluted channel, which is ſtained with the blood of our fellow-creatures.

But it is a ſort of treaſon to the honour, the ſpirit, the generoſity of Engliſhmen, to ſuppoſe they will perſevere in ſuch conduct. Admitting, however, a ſuppoſition, which it is painful to make; admitting that they ſhould abide by this ſyſtem of inhumanity, they will only retard, but will not finally prevent the abolition of ſlavery. The Africans have not long to ſuffer, nor their oppreſſors to triumph. Europe is haſtening towards a period too enlightened for the perpetuation of ſuch monſtrous abuſes. The miſts of ignorance and error are rolling faſt away,

and the benign beams of philoſophy are ſpreading their luſtre over the nations. —But whither have theſe children of captivity led me? I perceive I have wandered a great way from the National Aſſembly, where I was ſo happily ſeated, and of which I will tell you more in my next letter.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

THE Abbé Maury is one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed members of the National Aſſembly. He poſſeſſes aſtoniſhing powers of eloquence; but he has done his talents the injuſtice to make them ſubſervient to the narrow conſiderations of ſelf-intereſt. Had he diſplayed that ability in defence of civil and religious liberty, which he has employed in the ſervice of the exorbitant pretenſions of the church, he would have deſerved the higheſt applauſe of his country; inſtead of which he has called to the aid of his genius an auxiliary it ought to have ſcorned; that ſubtlety which tries "to make the worſe appear the better reaſon;" and he is ſtill more deteſted than admired. I am not ſurpriſed that a little mind is ſometimes tempted by intereſt to tread in a mean and ſordid path; but

I own it does aſtoniſh me that genius can be ſeduced from the fair field of honourable fame into thoſe ſerpentine ways where it can meet with no object worthy of its ambition. "Something too much of this." You ſhall hear a repartee of the Abbé Maury, who, after having made a very unpopular motion in the Aſſembly, was inſulted as he was going out; the people crying, as they are too apt to do, * "A la lanterne." The Abbé, turning to the crowd, anſwered, with equal indignation and ſpirit, † "Eh! Meſſieurs, ſi j'étois à la lanterne, ſeriez-vous plus éclairés?" The Abbé Maury, before the revolution, was in poſſeſſion of eight hundred farms, and has loſt ſixty thouſand livres a year in conſequence of that event. But enough of Monſ. l'Abbé, whoſe picture

* To the lantern.

† If I were at the lantern, would you be more enlightened?

picture I have juſt purchaſed in a ſnuff-box. You touch a ſpring, open the lid of the ſnuff-box, and the Abbé jumps up, and occaſions much ſurpriſe and merriment. The joke, however, is grown a little ſtale in France: but I ſhall bring the Abbé with me to England, where I flatter myſelf his ſudden appearance will afford ſome diverſion.

A ſingular but very reſpectable figure in the National Aſſembly is a Deputy from Britany, called Le Père Gerard. This venerable old man is a peaſant, and his appearance reminds one of thoſe times when Generals were called from the plough to take the command of armies. The dreſs of Le Père Gerard is made of a coarſe woollen cloth, which is worn by the peaſants of Britany, and is of ſuch ſtrong texture that a coat often deſcends from one generation to another. This cloth is called Pinchina; and the King, to whom the

old Breton has preſented ſeveral addreſſes from the Aſſembly, calls him, * *en badinage*, Le Pere Pinchina. When I ſaw him, he had on this everlaſting coat, and wore worſted ſtockings gartered above the knees. But what pleaſed me moſt in his appearance, were the long white hairs which hung down his ſhoulders; an ornament for which you know I have a particular predilection.

The reſpectable Père Gerard boaſts that he is deſcended from a race of deputies, his great grandfather having been choſen as a deputy to *les Etats-Généraux* in 1614, the laſt time the States were held, before that memorable period when they effected the revolution.

At the time when the ladies ſet the example of † *le don patriotique*, by offering their jewels, and the members of the National Aſſembly, in a moment of enthu-

* In pleaſantry, Father Pinchina.

† The patriotic donation.

enthuſiaſm, took the ſilver buckles out of their ſhoes, and laid them on the Preſident's table, the Père Gerard roſe, and ſaid, that he had no ſuch offering to give, his buckles being made of braſs, but that his *don patriotique* ſhould be that of rendering his ſervices to his country unpaid. The old man was heard by the Aſſembly with the applauſe he merited; and the people on the day of the Federation, carried him from the Champ de Mars to his own houſe in triumph on their ſhoulders.

Meſſieurs Charles and Alexander Lameth, two brothers, and Monſ. Rabeau de St. Eſtienne, are among the firſt patriots of the National Aſſembly, and have a very high reputation for talents. The French, who love what they call an * *équivoque*, tell you, *que Monſ. Rabeau vaut deux d'Mirabeau.*

The meetings of the Aſſembly, though

* A play upon words.

ſtill tumultous, are much leſs ſo than they were at the firſt commencement. A gentleman, who was preſent when the motion was made for aboliſhing monaſteries, told me, that the minds of the Members were, on that occaſion, inflamed to ſuch a height, that it appeared to him very probable that the debate would end in a maſſacre. He mentioned a circumſtance very characteriſtic of French vivacity. One of the Members was expreſſing himſelf in theſe words, "What is a Monk? A man who has renounced his father, his mother, every tie, every affection that is dear in nature! and for whom?"—before the ſpeaker could finiſh his ſentence, a Member from the other end of the hall ſeized the moment while the orator was drawing his breath, and called out, * "Pour une puiſſance étrangère," to the

* For a foreign power.

the great horror of *le côté noir*, for ſo the clergy are called.

The Democrates place themſelves on one ſide of the hall, and the Ariſtocrates on the other. The ſpectators in the galleries take ſuch a part in the debate, as frequently to expreſs their applauſe by clapping their hands with great violence. An old Maréchal of France roſe, the day I was at the Aſſembly, when they were debating on the military penſions, and declared, that in recompenſe for the ſervices which he had rendered his country, he deſired honours, and not pay. The Aſſembly clapped him, and the galleries joined in this mark of approbation. A young Frenchman, who ſat next me, whiſpered to me, * "Monſ. trouve apparemment que l'argent l'incommode."

* I ſuppoſe that gentleman finds money troubleſome.

The Members of the National Aſſembly are paid three crowns a day for their attendance; while in England a candidate for a ſeat in parliament often ſpends many thouſand pounds, and, with magnificent generoſity, makes a whole county drunk for a week, merely to enjoy the privilege of ſerving his country without pay.

The qualification requiſite for a member of the National Aſſembly, is that of poſſeſſing ſufficient property in land or houſes to pay taxes to the amount of a *marc d'argent*, which is the value of four *louis*. Every hundred of the citizens, who pay taxes to Government of three days labour, or three *livres*, have a right to vote for an elector; whoſe qualification is that of paying taxes to the amount of ten *livres*, or ten days labour. The electors of one department meet together in one aſſembly, and chooſe, from among their own body, the perſons

who are to direct the administration of that department. Those electors will also choose, in the same manner, the deputies sent by that department to the National Assembly. There will therefore be only one intermediate degree between the lowest order of active citizens, and the members of the National Assembly.

I was interrupted by a visitor, who related a little incident, which has interested me so much, that I can write of nothing else at present, and you shall therefore have it warm from my heart. While the National Assembly were deliberating upon the division of property among brothers, a young man of high birth and fortune, who is a member of the Assembly, entered with precipitation, and, mounting the tribune, with great emotion informed the Assembly, that he had just received accounts, that his father was dying; that he himself

was his eldeſt ſon, and had come to conjure the Aſſembly to paſs, without delay, that equitable decree, giving the younger ſons an equal ſhare of fortune with the eldeſt, in order, he ſaid, that his father might have the ſatisfaction, before he breathed his laſt, of knowing that all his children were ſecure of a proviſion. If you are not affected by this circumſtance, you have read it with very different feelings from thoſe with which I have written it: but if, on the contrary, you have fallen in love with this young Frenchman, do not imagine your paſſion is ſingular, for I am violently in love with him myſelf.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

YOU have not heard, perhaps, that on the day of the Federation at Paris, the national oath was taken throughout the whole kingdom, at the hour of twelve.

A great number of farmers and peaſants walked in the proceſſion at Rouen, bearing in their hands the inſtruments of their huſbandry, decorated with national ribbons. The national guard cut down branches from the trees, and ſtuck them in their hats; and a French gentleman of my acquaintance, who underſtands Engliſh, and reads Shakeſpeare, told me, that it ſeemed like Birnham Wood coming to Dunſinane.

The leaders of the French revolution are men well acquainted with the human

man heart. They have not truſted merely to the force of reaſon, but have ſtudied to intereſt in their cauſe the moſt powerful paſſions of human nature, by the appointment of ſolemnities perfectly calculated to awaken that general ſympathy which is caught from heart to heart with irreſiſtible energy, fills every eye with tears, and throbs in every boſom.

I have heard of a proceſſion, which took place not long ago in one of the diſtricts of Paris, in which five hundred young ladies walked dreſſed in white, and decorated with cockades of the national ribbon, leading by ſilken cords a number of priſoners newly releaſed from captivity; and who, with their faces covered by long flowing veils, were conducted to a church where they returned thanks for their deliverance.

Thus have the leaders of the revolution engaged beauty as one of their auxiliaries;

iliaries; juſtly concluding, that, to the gallantry and ſenſibility of Frenchmen, no argument would be found more efficacious than that of a pretty face.

I have juſt read a private letter from a little town about two leagues from Montauban, called Negre-Peliſſe, where the inhabitants, on the day of the Federation, diſplayed a liberality of ſentiment which reflects honour, not only on themſelves, but on the age in which we live. The national guard of this little town and its environs, were aſſembled to take the national oath. Half of the inhabitants being Proteſtants, and the other half Catholics, the Curé and the Proteſtant Miniſter aſcended together one altar, which had been erected by the citizens, and adminiſtered the oath to their reſpective pariſhioners at the ſame moment; after which, Catholics and Proteſtants joined in ſinging Te Deum.

Surely

Surely religious worſhip was never performed more truly in the ſpirit of the Divine Author of Chriſtianity, whoſe great precept is that of univerſal love! Surely the incenſe of praiſe was never more likely to aſcend to Heaven, than when the Catholics and Proteſtants of Negre-Peliſſe offered it together!

This amiable community, when their devotions were finiſhed, walked in proceſſion to a ſpot where fireworks had been prepared; and, it being conſidered as a mark of honour to light the fireworks, the office was reſerved for Monſ. le Curé, who, however, inſiſted on the participation of the Proteſtant Miniſter in this diſtinction; upon which the Miniſter received a wax taper from the Curé, and with him led the proceſſion. The fire-works repreſented two trees: one, twiſted and diſtorted, was emblematical of ariſtocracy, and was ſoon entirely conſumed; when a tall, ſtrait plant,

plant, figurative of patriotiſm, appeared to riſe from the aſhes of the former, and continued to burn with undiminiſhed ſplendour.

When we look back on the ignorance, the ſuperſtition, the barbarous perſecutions of Gothic times, is it not ſomething to be thankful for, that we exiſt at this enlightened period, when ſuch evils are no more; when particular tenets of religious belief are no longer imputed as crimes; when the human mind has made as many important diſcoveries in morality as in ſcience, and liberality of ſentiment is cultivated with as much ſucceſs as arts and learning; when, in ſhort, (and *you* are not one of thoſe who will ſuſpect that I am not all the while a good Engliſh woman) when one can witneſs an event ſo ſublime as the French revolution?

LETTER

LETTER IX.

YESTERDAY I received your letter; in which you accuſe me of deſcribing with too much enthuſiaſm the public rejoicings in France, and propheſy that I ſhall return to my own country a fierce republican. In anſwer to theſe accuſations, I ſhall obſerve, that it is very difficult, with common ſenſibility, to avoid ſympathiſing in general happineſs. My love of the French revolution is the natural reſult of this ſympathy; and therefore my political creed is entirely an affair of the heart; for I have not been ſo abſurd as to conſult my head upon matters of which it is ſo incapable of judging. If I were at Rome, you would not be ſurpriſed to hear that I had viſited, with the warmeſt reverence, every ſpot where any relics of her ancient

cient grandeur could be traced; that I had flown to the capitol; that I had kiſſed the earth on which the Roman ſenate ſat in council: And can you then expect me to have ſeen the Federation at the Champ-de Mars, and the National Aſſembly of France, with indifference? Before you inſiſt that I ought to have done ſo, point out to me, in the page of Roman hiſtory, a ſpectacle more ſolemn, more affecting, than the Champ de Mars exhibited; or more magnanimous, more noble efforts in the cauſe of liberty than have been made by the National Aſſembly. Whether the new form of government, eſtabliſhing in France, be more or leſs perfect than our own,

"Who ſhall decide, when doctors diſagree,
"And ſoundeſt caſuiſts doubt, like you and me?"

I fancy we had better leave the determination of this queſtion in the hands of poſterity. In the mean time, I wiſh

that

that ſome of our political critics would ſpeak with leſs contempt, than they are apt to do, of the new conſtitution of France, and no longer repeat after one another the trite remark, that the French have gone too far, becauſe they have gone farther than ourſelves; as if it were not poſſible that that degree of influence which is perfectly ſafe in the hand of the executive part of our government, might be dangerous, at this criſis, to the liberty of France: but be this as it may, it appears evident that the temple of Freedom which they are erecting, even if imperfect in ſome of its proportions, muſt be preferable to the old gloomy Gothic fabric which they have laid in ruins. And, therefore, when I hear my good countrymen, who guard their own rights with ſuch unremitting vigilance, and who would rather part with life than liberty, ſpeak with contempt of the French for having

ing imbibed the noble leſſon which England has taught, I cannot but ſuſpect that ſome mean jealouſy lurks beneath the ungenerous cenſure. I cannot but ſuſpect, that, while the fair and honourable traders of our commercial country act with the moſt liberal ſpirit in their ordinary dealings with other nations, they wiſh to make a monopoly of liberty, and are angry that France ſhould claim a ſhare of that precious property; by which, however, ſhe may ſurely be enriched, without our being impoveriſhed. The French, on the contrary, ſeem to have imbibed, with the principles of liberty, the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of reſpect and friendſhip towards that people, whom they gratefully acknowledge to have been their maſters in this ſcience. They are, to uſe their own phraſe, *" devenus fous des Anglois," and fondly imagine that the applauſe

* Become madly fond of the Engliſh.

applauſe they have received from a ſociety of philoſophers in our country, is the general voice of the nation.

Whether the new conſtitution be compoſed of durable materials or not, I leave to politicians to determine; but it requires no extraordinary ſagacity to pronounce, that the French will henceforth be free. The love of liberty has pervaded all ranks of the people, who, if its bleſſings muſt be purchaſed with blood, will not ſhrink from paying the price:

"While ev'n the peaſant boaſts his rights to ſcan,
"And learns to venerate himſelf as man."

The enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of liberty diſplays itſelf, not merely on the days of ſolemn ceremonies—occupies not only every ſerious deliberation—but is mingled with the gaiety of ſocial enjoyment. When they converſe, liberty is the theme of diſcourſe; when they dance, the figure of the cotillon is adapted to

a national

a national tune; and, when they ſing, it is but to repeat a vow of fidelity to the conſtitution, at which all who are preſent inſtantly join in chorus, and ſportively lift up their hands in confirmation of this favourite ſentiment.

In every ſtreet, you ſee children performing the military exerciſe, and carrying banners made of paper of the national colours, wearing grenadiers caps of the ſame compoſition, and armed, though not like Jack the Giant-killer, with ſwords of ſharpneſs.

Upon the whole, Liberty appears in France adorned with the freſhneſs of youth, and is loved with the ardour of paſſion. In England ſhe is ſeen in her matron ſtate, and, like other ladies at that period, is beheld with ſober veneration.

With reſpect to myſelf, I muſt acknowledge, that, in my admiration of the revolution in France, I blend the

feelings

feelings of private friendſhip with my ſympathy in public bleſſings; ſince the old conſtitution is connected in my mind with the image of a friend confined in the gloomy receſſes of a dungeon, and pining in hopeleſs captivity; while, with the new conſtitution, I unite the ſoothing idea of his return to proſperity, honours, and happineſs.

This perſon is Monſ. du F——, whoſe lady I am come to France to viſit. They are friends with whom I wept in the day of their adverſity, and with whom in their proſperity I have haſtened to rejoice. Their hiſtory is moſt affecting; and, when I leave the hurry of Paris, to accompany them to their Château in Normandy, I will make you acquainted with incidents as pathetic as romance itſelf can furniſh. Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER X.

WE have been driving at a furious rate, for ſeveral days paſt, through the city of Paris, which, I think, bears the ſame reſemblance to London (if you will allow me the indulgence of a ſimile) that the grand natural objects in a rude and barren country bear to the tame but regular beauties of a ſcene rich with cultivation. The ſtreets of Paris are narrow, dark, and dirty; but we are repaid for this by noble edifices, which powerfully intereſt the attention. The ſtreets of London are broad, airy, light, and elegant; but I need not tell you that they lead ſcarcely to any edifices at which foreigners do not look with contempt. London has, therefore, moſt of the beautiful, and Paris of the ſublime, according to Mr. Burke's definition of theſe qualities; for, I aſſure you, a ſen-

ſation of terror is not wanting to the ſublimity of Paris, while the coachman drives through the ſtreets with the impetuoſity of a Frenchman, and one expects every ſtep the horſes take to be fatal to the foot-paſſengers, who are heard exclaiming, * "Que les rues de Paris ſont ariſtocrates." By the way, *ariſtocratie*, and *à la nation*, are become cant terms, which, as Sterne ſaid of *tant pis*, and *tant mieux*, may now be conſidered as two of the great hinges in French converſation. Every thing tireſome or unpleaſant, "c'eſt une ariſtocratie!" and every thing charming and agreeable is, "à la nation."

I have ſeen all the fine buildings at Paris, and fancy I ſhould have admired the *façade* of the Louvre, the beautiful new church of St. Genevieve, and ſome other edifices, even if I had not been told previouſly, by a connoiſſeur in theſe

* That the ſtreets of Paris are Ariſtocrates.

theſe matters, the preciſe degree of admiration which it was proper to beſtow on every public building in Paris; but, having received ſuch minute inſtructions on this ſubject, I can form but an imperfect notion of my own taſte for architecture.

At the requeſt of Madame Brulart, Monſ. de Chartres ſent orders for our admiſſion to the Palais Royal, which is not at preſent ſhewn to the public. Of the collection of pictures I am incapable of ſaying any thing, and enough has been already ſaid by thoſe who underſtand its merits. Fine painting gives me conſiderable pleaſure, but has not the power of calling forth my ſenſibility like fine poetry; and I am willing to believe that the art I love is the moſt perfect of the two; and that it would have been impoſſible for the pencil of Raphael to convey all thoſe ideas to

the mind, and excite all thoſe emotions in the heart, which are awakened by the pen of Shakeſpeare.

I confeſs, the only picture in Paris which has coſt me any tears, is that of La Valliere, in the convent of the Carmelites. She is repreſented in the habit of a Carmelite: all the former ornaments of her perſon lie ſcattered at her feet; and her eyes are caſt up to heaven, with a look of the deepeſt anguiſh. While I gazed at her picture, I lamented that ſenſibility which led into the moſt fatal errors a mind that ſeems to have been formed for virtue, and which, even in the boſom of pleaſure, bewailed its own weakneſs. How can one forbear regretting, that the capricious inconſtant monarch, to whom ſhe gave her heart, ſhould have inſpired a paſſion of which he was ſo unworthy; a paſſion which appears to have been wholly unmixed with intereſt, vanity, or ambition?

And how can one avoid pitying the deſolate penitent, who, for ſo many years, in the diſmal gloom of a convent, deplored her errors, and felt at once the bitterneſs of remorſe, and the agony of diſappointed love? while, probably,

"In every hymn ſhe ſeem'd his voice to hear,
"And dropp'd with every bead too ſoft a tear!"

If the figure of this beautiful Carmelite had not come acroſs my imagination, I ſhould have told you ſooner, that the Palais Royal is a ſquare, of which the Duc d'Orleans's palace forms one ſide. You walk under piazzas round this ſquare, which is ſurrounded with coffee-houſes, and ſhops diſplaying a variety of ribbons, trinkets, and caricature prints, which are now as common at Paris as at London. The walks under the piazzas are crowded with people: and in the upper part of the ſquare, tents are placed, where coffee, lemonade, ices, &c. are ſold. Nothing is heard

but the voice of mirth; nothing is ſeen but cheerful faces; and I have no doubt that the Palais Royal is, upon the whole, one of the merrieſt ſcenes under the ſun. Indeed, what is moſt ſtriking to a ſtranger at Paris, is that general appearance of gaiety, which it is eaſy to perceive is not aſſumed for the moment, but is the habit of the mind, and which is, therefore, ſo exhilarating to a ſpectator of any benevolence. It is this which gives ſuch a charm to every public place and walk in Paris. Kenſington Gardens can boaſt as fine verdure, as majeſtic trees, as noble walks, and perhaps more beautiful women than the gardens of the Tuilleries; but we ſhall look in vain for that ſprightly animation, that everlaſting cheerfulneſs, which render the Tuilleries ſo enchanting.

We have juſt returned from the Hôpital des Invalides, a noble building, adorned with fine paintings which record

cord the hiſtory of ſome celebrated ſaints, whoſe exploits were recounted with incredible rapidity by the man who conducted us through the chapels, and who ſeemed to think that nothing could be more abſurd than our curioſity, after having heard theſe ſtories from his lips, to obſerve how they were told by the painters.

As we paſſed through the church, we ſaw ſeveral old ſoldiers kneeling at the confeſſionals, with that ſolemn devotion which ſeemed undiſturbed by our intruſion, and fixed upon "the things that are above."

A few days before the taking of the Baſtille, a crowd of the Pariſians aſſembled at the Hôpital des Invalides, and demanded arms of the old ſoldiers; who anſwered that they were the friends of their fellow-citizens, but durſt not deliver up their arms without the appearance of a conteſt; and therefore

desired that the people would assemble before the gates in greater numbers the next day, when, after firing a little powder upon them, they would throw down their arms. The people accordingly returned the following day; and the invalids, after a faint show of resistance, threw down their arms, which the citizens took up, embraced the old men, and then departed.

We stopped yesterday at La Maison de Ville, and went into a large apartment, where the mayor and corporation assemble. The walls are hung round with pictures of Kings and Dukes, which I looked at with much less respect than at the chair on which Monsr. Bailly sits. If his picture should ever be placed in this apartment, I fancy that, in the estimation of posterity, it will obtain precedency over all the Princes in the collection.

As we came out of La Maison de Ville,

Ville, we were shewn [illegible] opposite, the lamp-iron* [illegible] for want of a gallows [illegible] of popular fury were [illegible] that the spirit of [illegible] blood within my veins. At that moment, for the first time, I lamented the revolution; and, forgetting the impudence, or the guilt, of those unfortunate men, could only reflect with horror on the dreadful expiation they had made. I painted in my imagination the agonies of their families and friends; nor could I for a considerable time chase these gloomy images from my thoughts.

It is for ever to be regretted, that so dark a shade of ferocious revenge was thrown across the glories of the revolution. But, alas! where do the records of history point out a revolution unstained by some actions of barbarity? When do the passions of human nature

* The lamp-iron.

riſe to that pitch which produces great events, without wandering into ſome irregularities? If the French revolution ſhould coſt no farther bloodſhed, it muſt be allowed, notwithſtanding a few ſhocking inſtances of public vengeance, that the liberty of twenty-four millions of people will have been purchaſed at a far cheaper rate than could ever have been expected from the former experience of the world.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

WE are juſt returned from Verſailles, where I could not help fancying I ſaw, in the back ground of that magnificent abode of a deſpot, the gloomy dungeons of the Baſtille, which ſtill haunt my imagination, and prevented my being much dazzled by the ſplendour of this ſuperb palace.

We were ſhewn the paſſages through which the Queen eſcaped from her own apartment to the King's, on the memorable night when the *Poiſſardes* viſited Verſailles, and alſo the balcony at which ſhe ſtood with the Dauphin in her arms, when, after having remained a few hours concealed in ſome ſecret receſs of the palace, it was thought proper to comply with the deſire of the crowd, who repeatedly demanded her preſence.

I could not help moralizing a little, on being told that the apartment to which this balcony belongs is the very room in which Louis the Fourteenth died; little ſuſpecting what a ſcene would, in the courſe of a few years, be acted on that ſpot.

All the bread which could be procured in the town of Verſailles, was diſtributed among the *Poiſſardes*; who, with ſavage ferocity, held up their morſels of bread on their bloody pikes, towards the balcony where the Queen ſtood, crying, in a tone of defiance, * "Nous avons du pain!"

During the whole of the journey from Verſailles to Paris, the Queen held the Dauphin in her arms, who had been previouſly taught to put his infant hands together, and attempt to ſoften the enraged multitude by repeating, † "Grace pour maman!"

Monſ.

* We now have bread. † Spare mama!

Monf. [illegible]
whole Gar[illegible]
maſſacred a [illegible]
the incen[illegible]
demand[illegible]
Corps [illegible]
Fayette [illegible]
The [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

* The King [illegible]

de la Fayette), hoped, when his Majeſty came out of La Maiſon de Ville, they would teſtify their gratitude. In a few minutes the King appeared, and was received with the loudeſt acclamations.

When the Queen was lately aſked to give her depoſition on the attempt which, it is ſaid, was made to aſſaſſinate her, by the *Poiſſardes* at Verſailles, ſhe anſwered, with great prudence, "*Jai tout vu, tout entendu, & tout oublié!"

The King is now extremely popular, and the people ſing in the ſtreets, to the old tune of †"Vive Henri Quatre!" &c. "Vive Louis Seize!"

The Queen is, I am told, much altered lately in her appearance, but ſhe is ſtill a fine woman. Madame is a beautiful girl; and the Dauphin, who is about ſeven years of age is the idol of the people.

* I ſaw every thing, heard every thing, and have forgot every thing.

† Long live Henry the Fourth. Long live Lewis the Sixteenth.

ple. They expect that he will be educated in the principles of the new conſtitution, and will be taught to conſider himſelf leſs a king than a citizen. He appears to be a ſweet engaging child, and I have juſt heard one of his ſayings repeated. He has a collection of animals, which he feeds with his own hand. A few days ago, an ungrateful rabbit, who was his firſt favourite, bit his finger when he was giving him food. The Prince, while ſmarting with the pain, called out to his **petit lapin*, "Tu es Ariſtocrate." One of the attendants inquired, "Eh! Monſeigneur, qu'eſt-ce que c'eſt qu'un Ariſtocrate." "Ce ſont ceux," anſwered the Prince, "qui font de la peine à Papa."

The King lately called the Queen, *en badinage*, Madame Capet; to which ſhe retorted very readily, by giving his Majeſty

* Little rabbit, Thou art an Ariſtocrate.—And pray, my Lord, what is an Ariſtocrate?—Thoſe who make my papa uneaſy.

jeſty the appellation of "Monſieur *Capot."

When *les Gardes Françoiſes* laid down their arms at Verſailles, their officers endeavoured to perſuade them to take them up. An officer of my acquaintance told me, that he ſaid to his ſoldiers, †"Mes enfans, vous allez donc me quitter, vous ne m'aimez plus?" "Mon officier," they anſwered, "nous vous aimons tous: s'il s'agit d'aller contre nos ennemis, nous ſommes tous prêts à vous ſuivre; mais nous ne tirerons jamais contre nos compatriotes." Since that period, whenever any of *les Gardes Françoiſes* appear, they are followed by the acclamations of the people, and "Vivent

*Capot is the French term at picquet, when the game is loſt.

† My friends, you are going then to forſake me; I poſſeſs none of your affection?—Captain, they anſwered, we all love you; and, if you will lead us againſt our enemies, we are all ready to follow you: but we will never fire at our fellow-citizens.

*" Vivent les Gardes Françoiſes!" reſounds from every quarter.

While we were ſitting, after dinner, at the inn at Verſailles, the door was ſuddenly opened, and a Franciſcan friar entered the room. He had ſo ſtrong a reſemblance to Sterne's monk, that I am perſuaded he muſt be a deſcendant of the ſame family. We could not, like Sterne, beſtow immortality, but we gave ſome alms; and the venerable old monk, after thanking us with affecting ſimplicity, added, ſpreading out his hands with a ſlow and ſolemn movement, †" Que la paix ſoit avec vous!" and then departed. I have been frequently put in mind of Sterne, ſince my arrival in France; and the firſt poſt-boy I ſaw in jack-boots, appeared to me a very claſſical figure, by recalling the idea of La Fleur mounted on his *bidet*.

* Long live the French Guards.

† Peace be with you.

LETTER

LETTER V.

WE have been at all the Theatres, and I am charmed with the comic actors. The tragic performers afforded me much leſs pleaſure. Before we can admire Madame Veſtris, the firſt tragic actreſs of Paris, we muſt have loſt the impreſſion (a thing impoſſible) of Mrs. Siddons's performance; who, inſtead of "tearing a paſſion to rags," like Madame Veſtris, only tears the hearts of the audience with ſympathy.

Moſt of the pieces we have ſeen at the French theatres have been little comedies relative to the circumſtances of the times, and, on that account, preferred, in this moment of enthuſiaſm, to all the wit of Moliere. Theſe little pieces might perhaps read coldly enough in your ſtudy, but have a moſt charming

ing effect [illegible]
applause from [illegible]
national guard [illegible]
scenes repre[illegible]
national song [illegible]
whole audience [illegible]
is one air, [illegible]
universal [illegible]
"le Ca[illegible]
the song [illegible]
not only [illegible]
ry [illegible]
and village of [illegible]
man, and [illegible]
where the signal of pleasure, the [illegible]
sound which animates every bosom with
delight, and of which every ear is cha-
moured; and I have heard the most
serious political conversations end by
a sportive assurance, in allusion to this
song, *que* "ÇA IRA!"

Giornowiche,

* It will go on.

Giornowiche, the celebrated player on the violin, who was ſo much the faſhion laſt winter at London, I am told, ſometimes amuſed himſelf at Paris, by getting up into one of the trees of the Palais Royal, after it was dark, and calling forth tones from his violin, fit to "take the priſon'd ſoul, and lap it in Elyſium." He has frequently detained ſome thouſands of people half the night in the Palais Royal, who, before they diſcovered the performer, uſed to call out in rapture, "Bravo, bravo! *c'eſt mieux que Giornowiche."

I am juſt returned from ſeeing the Gobelin tapeſtry, which appears the work of magic. It gave me pleaſure to ſee two pictures of Henry the Fourth. In one, he is placed at ſupper with the miller's family; and in the other, he is embracing Sully, who is brought forward on a couch, after having been wounded

* This is better than Giornowiche.

wounded in battle. Nothing has afforded me more delight, ſince I came to France, than the honours which are paid to my favourite hero, Henry the Fourth, whom I prefer to all the Alexanders and Fredericks that ever exiſted. They may be terribly ſublime, if you will, and have great claims to my admiration; but as for my love, all that portion of it which I beſtow on heroes, is already in Henry's poſſeſſion.

Little ſtatues of Henry the Fourth and Sully are very common. Sully is repreſented kneeling at the feet of this amiable Prince, who holds out his hand to him; and on the baſe of the ſtatue are written the words which Sully records in his Memoirs: * "Maiz levez-vous, levez-vous donc, Sully; on croiroit que je vous pardonne."

While the ſtatue of Henry the Fourth, on

* But riſe, pray riſe, Sully; they will believe I am forgiving you.

on the Pont-Neuf, is illuminated and decorated with national ribbon, that of Louis the Fourteenth, in the Place Victoire, is ſtripped of its former oſtentatious ornaments; the nations which were repreſented enchained at his feet, having been removed ſince the revolution. The figure of Fame is, however, ſtill left hovering behind the ſtatue of the King, with a crown of laurel in her hand, which, it is generally ſuppoſed, ſhe is going to place upon his head. But I have heard of a French wit, who inquired whether it was really her intention to place the laurel on his Majeſty's head, or whether ſhe had juſt taken it off.

In our ride this morning, we ſtopped at the Place Royale, where I was diverted by reading, on the front of a little ſhop under the piazzas, theſe words: "Robelin, *écrivain.—Mémoires

* Writer.—Memoirs and letters written at a moderate price, for the Nation.

moires & lettres écrites à juſte prix, à la nation." I am told that Monſ. Robelin is in very flouriſhing buſineſs; and perhaps I might have had recourſe to him for aſſiſtance in my correſpondence with you, if I did not leave Paris to-morrow. You ſhall hear from me from Rouen.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

WE had a moſt agreeable journey from Paris to Rouen, travelling a hundred miles along the borders of the Seine, through a beautiful country, richly wooded, and finely diverſified by hill and valley. We paſſed ſeveral magnificent *châteaux*, and ſaw many a ſpire belonging to Gothic edifices, which, it would ſeem, were built of ſuch laſting materials, with the moral purpoſe of leading the mind to reflect on the comparatively ſhort duration of human life. Frequently an old venerable croſs, placed at the ſide of the road by the piety of remote ages, and never paſſed by Roman Catholics without ſome mark of reſpect, throws a kind of religious ſanctity over the landſcape.

We ſtopped to look at the immenſe machine

machine which conveys water to Verſailles and Marly. The water is raiſed, by means of this machine, ſixty feet, and is carried the diſtance of five hundred. I never heard a ſound which filled my mind with more horror than the noiſe occaſioned by the movements of this tremendous machine; while, at the ſame time, the vaſt chaſms, where the water foams with angry violence, make the brain giddy; and I was glad to leave theſe images of terror.

Part of our journey was performed by moon-light, which ſlept moſt ſweetly upon the bank, and ſpread over the landſcape thoſe ſoftened graces which I will not attempt to deſcribe, leſt my pen ſhould ſtray into rhyme.

We paſſed the *château* of Roſni, a noble domain given to Sully by Henry the Fourth; a teſtimony of that friendſhip which reflects equal honour on the King and the Miniſter.

Giornowiche, the celebrated player on the violin, who was ſo much the faſhion laſt winter at London, I am told, ſometimes amuſed himſelf at Paris, by getting up into one of the trees of the Palais Royal, after it was dark, and calling forth tones from his violin, fit to "take the priſon'd ſoul, and lap it in Elyſium." He has frequently detained ſome thouſands of people half the night in the Palais Royal, who, before they diſcovered the performer, uſed to call out in rapture, "Bravo, bravo! *c'eſt mieux que Giornowiche."

I am juſt returned from ſeeing the Gobelin tapeſtry, which appears the work of magic. It gave me pleaſure to ſee two pictures of Henry the Fourth. In one, he is placed at ſupper with the miller's family; and in the other, he is embracing Sully, who is brought forward on a couch, after having been wounded

* This is better than Giornowiche.

wounded in battle. Nothing has afforded me more delight, ſince I came to France, than the honours which are paid to my favourite hero, Henry the Fourth, whom I prefer to all the Alexanders and Fredericks that ever exiſted. They may be terribly ſublime, if you will, and have great claims to my admiration; but as for my love, all that portion of it which I beſtow on heroes, is already in Henry's poſſeſſion.

Little ſtatues of Henry the Fourth and Sully are very common. Sully is repreſented kneeling at the feet of this amiable Prince, who holds out his hand to him; and on the baſe of the ſtatue are written the words which Sully records in his Memoirs: *"Maiz levez-vous, levez-vous donc, Sully; on croiroit que je vous pardonne."

While the ſtatue of Henry the Fourth, on

* But riſe, pray riſe, Sully; they will believe I am forgiving you.

ſo good a maſter. It is impoſſible not to regret that the property of the Cardinal de la Rochefoucault is diminiſhed, by whom it was only employed in diſpenſing happineſs.

After viſiting the caſtle, I returned ſomewhat in mournful mood to the inn, where there was nothing calculated to convey one cheerful idea. The cieling of our apartment was croſſed with old bare beams; the tapeſtry with which the room was hung, diſplayed, like the dreſs of Otway's old woman, "variety of wretchedneſs;" the canopied beds were of coarſe dirty ſtuff; two pictures, in tawdry gilt frames, ſlandered the ſweet countenances of the Dauphin and Madame; and the floor was paved with brick. In ſhort, one can ſcarcely imagine a ſcene more remote from England, in accommodation and comfort, than the country inns of France: yet, in this habitation, where an Engliſh-

man

LETTER XIV.

ROUEN is one of the largeſt and moſt commercial towns of France. It is ſituated on the banks of the Seine; has a fine quay, and a ſingular bridge, of barges placed cloſe together, with planks fixed upon them: the bridge riſes and ſinks with the tide, and opens for veſſels to paſs.

The ſtreets of Rouen are ſo narrow, dark, and frightful, that, to borrow an expreſſion from Madame Sevigné, "elles abuſent de la permiſſion qu'ont les rues Françoiſes d'être laides." There are many figures of Saints to be ſeen from theſe ugly ſtreets, placed in little niches in the walls. The Virgin Mary is ſeated in one of theſe niches, with the infant in her arms; and in the neighbourhood is St.

* "They abuſe the permiſſion the French ſtreets have of being ugly."

St. Anne, who has the credit of having taught the Virgin to read. Every night the general darkneſs of the town is a little diſpelled by the lamps which the people place in the niches, * "pour éclairer les Saints."

Rouen is ſurrounded by fine *boulevards*, that form very beautiful walks. On the top of the hill of Ste Catharine, which overlooks the town, are the ruins of a fort called St. Michell, from which Henry the Fourth beſieged Rouen. I love to be put in mind of Henry the Fourth, and am therefore very well pleaſed that, whenever I go to walk, I can fix my eyes on the hill of Ste Catharine.

I always feel a little aſhamed of my country, when I paſs the ſpot where the Maid of Orleans was executed, and on which her ſtatue ſtands, a monument of our diſgrace. The aſhes of her perſe-

* "To light the Saints."

cutor, John Duke of Bedford, repoſe at no great diſtance, within a tomb of black marble, in the cathedral, which was built by the Engliſh. One cannot feel much reſpect for the judgment of our anceſtors, in chooſing, of all places under the ſun, the cathedral of Rouen for the tomb of him whoſe name is tranſmitted to us with the epithet of the *good* Duke of Bedford: for you have ſcarcely left the cathedral, before the ſtatue of Jean d'Arc ſtares you in the face, and ſeems to caſt a moſt formidable ſhade over the *good* Duke's virtues.

The cathedral is a very magnificent edifice; and the great bell is ten feet high, and weighs thirty-ſix thouſand pounds. But, in France, it is not what is *ancient*, but what is *modern*, that moſt powerfully engages attention. Nothing in this fine old cathedral intereſted me ſo much as the conſecrated banner, which,

which, [illegible]
placed [illegible]
inscribed [illegible]
rons [illegible]
enters the [illegible]
reads the [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
But the [illegible]
[illegible]
the [illegible]
of the [illegible]
[illegible]
of [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

power, and the dark iniquity of *lettres-de-cachet*; to quench the fair ſtar of liberty, which has ariſen on their hemiſphere, and ſuffer themſelves to be once more guided by the meteor of deſpotiſm.

A very conſiderable number, even among the nobility of France, have had the virtue to ſupport the cauſe of freedom; and, forgetting the little conſiderations of vanity, which have ſome importance in the ordinary courſe of human affairs, but which are loſt and annihilated when the mind is animated by any great ſentiment, they have choſen to become the benefactors rather than the oppreſſors of their country; the citizens of a free State, inſtead of the ſlaves of a deſpotic Monarch. They will no longer bear arms to gratify the ambition, or the caprice of a Miniſter; they will no longer exert that impetuous and gallant ſpirit, for which they have ever been diſtinguiſhed, in any cauſe

cauſe unworthy of its efforts. The fire of valour, which they have too often employed for the purpoſes of deſtruction, will henceforth be directed to more generous ends. They will chooſe another path to renown. Inſtead of attempting to take the citadel of glory by ſtorm, they will prefer the fame of an honourable defence, and, renouncing the ſanguinary laurel, ſtrive with more exalted enthuſiaſm, to obtain the civic wreath. Yes, the French nation will inviolably guard, will tranſmit to poſterity, the ſacred rights of freedom. Future ages will celebrate, with grateful commemoration, the fourteenth of July; and ſtrangers, when they viſit France, will haſten with impatience to the Champ de Mars, filled with that enthuſiaſm which is awakened by the view of a place where any great ſcene has been acted. I think I hear them exclaim, "Here the Federation was held! here an aſſembled na-

tion devoted themſelves to freedom!" I fancy I ſee them pointing out the ſpot on which the altar of the country ſtood. I ſee them eagerly ſearching for the place where they have heard it record-ed, that the National Aſſembly were ſeated! I think of theſe things, and then repeat to myſelf with tranſport, "*I* was a ſpectator of the Federation!"

But theſe meditations have led me to travel through the ſpace of ſo many centuries, that it is really difficult to get back again to the preſent times. Did you expect that I ſhould ever dip my pen in politics, who uſed to take ſo ſmall an intereſt in public affairs, that I recollect a gentleman of my acquaintance ſurpriſed me not a little, by informing me of the war between the Turks and the Ruſſians, at a time when all the people of Europe, except myſelf, had been two years in poſſeſſion of this intelligence?

If

If however my love of the French revolution requires an apology, you ſhall receive one in a very ſhort time; for I am going to Monſ. du F——'s *château*, and will ſend you from thence the hiſtory of his misfortunes. They were the inflictions of tyranny; and you will rejoice with me that tyranny is no more.

Before I cloſe my letter, I ſhall mention a ſingular privilege of the church of Rouen; which is, the power of ſetting free a murderer every year on the day of Aſcenſion. It ſeems that in the time of King Dagobert, who reigned in the ſixth century, a horrible and unrelenting dragon deſolated the country, ſparing neither man nor beaſt. St. Romain, who was then biſhop of Rouen, aſked for two criminals to aſſiſt him in an enterpriſe he had the courage to meditate againſt the dragon; and with theſe *aides-de-camp* he ſallied forth, killed

the monſter, and delivered the country. In conſequence of this miracle, Dagobert gave the ſucceſſors of St. Romain the privilege of ſetting a murderer free every year on Aſcenſion-day. The bones of St. Romain are carried by the criminal in a gilt box through the ſtreets: the figure of a hideous animal repreſenting the dragon, though it is ſuſpected of ſlandering his countenance, accompanies theſe venerable bones, and has generally a young living wolf placed in its maw, except when it is **jour maigre*, and then the dragon is provided with a large fiſh. The counſellors of the parliament, dreſſed in their ſcarlet robes, attend this proceſſion to a church, where high maſs is ſaid; and, theſe ceremonies being performed, the criminal is ſet at liberty; but it is only where there are ſome ſtrong alleviating circumſtances in the caſe of the offender, that

* Faſt-day.

that he is ſuffered in this manner to evade the puniſhment of his crimes.

Yeſterday, in a little town called Sotte Ville, joined to Rouen by the bridge, a political diſpute aroſe between the Curé and his pariſhioners. The enraged Curé exclaimed, *" Vous êtes une aſſemblée d'ânes;" to which one of the pariſhioners anſwered, with great calmneſs, †" Oui, Monſ. le Curé, & vous en êtes le paſteur."

* You are an aſſembly of aſſes.

† Yes, Sir; and you are our preacher.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

I HEARD *la meſſe militaire*, on Sunday laſt, at a church where all the national guard of Rouen attended. The ſervice began with the loudeſt thunder of drums and trumpets, and ſeemed more like a ſignal for battle than for devotion; but the muſic ſoon ſoftened into the moſt ſoothing ſounds, which flowed from the organ, clarinets, flutes, and hautboys; the prieſts chanted, and the people made reſponſes. The wax tapers were lighted; holy water was ſprinkled on the ground; incenſe was burnt at the altar; and the elevation of the Hoſt was announced by the ſound of the drum; upon which the people knelt down, and the prieſt proſtrated his face towards the earth. There is ſomething

* The military maſs.

ſomething affecting in the pomp and ſolemnities of theſe ceremonies. Indeed, the Roman Catholic worſhip, though a ſad ſtumbling-block to reaſon, is ſtriking to the imagination. I have more than once heard the ſervice for the dead performed, and never can hear it without emotion; without feeling that in thoſe melancholy ſeparations, which bury every hope of the ſurvivor in the relentleſs grave, the heart that can delude itſelf with the belief that his prayers may avail any thing to the departed object of its affections, muſt find conſolation in thus uniting a tribute of tenderneſs, with the performance of a religious duty.

We have been at ſeveral convents at Rouen. The firſt to which we went was a convent of Benedictine Nuns. When we had entered the gates we rang a bell, and a ſervant appeared, and deſired us to go up ſtairs to the parloir. We opened a wrong door, and found, in a room grated

grated acroſs the middle with iron bars, a young man ſitting on one ſide of the grate, and a young nun on the other. I could not help thinking that the heart of this young man was placed in a perilous ſituation; for where can a young woman appear ſo intereſting, as when ſeen within that gloomy barrier, which death alone can remove? What is there, in all the oſtentation of female dreſs, ſo likely to affect a man of ſenſibility, as that diſmal habit which ſeems ſo much at variance with youth and beauty, and is worn as the melancholy ſymbol of an eternal renunciation of the world and all its pleaſures? We made an apology to the nun for our intruſion; and ſhe directed us to another apartment, where, a few minutes after we had ſeated ourſelves on one ſide of the grate, La Dépoſitaire entered on the other, and told us that the Abbeſs, whom we had deſired to ſee, was not yet riſen from dinner; and La Dépoſitaire hoped we would

would wait a little; *" Parce que," ſaid ſhe, " Madame l'Abbeſſe étoit obligée hier de ſe lever de table de bonne heure, & elle ſe trouvoit un peu incommodée." You muſt obſerve that the Abbeſs dined at three o'clock, and it was now paſt ſix. At length this lady, who was ſo fond of long dinners, appeared. She is a woman of fifty, but is ſtill handſome; has a frank agreeable countenance, fine eyes, and had put on her veil in a very becoming manner. We wiſhed to be admitted to the interior part of the convent; and with this view a French gentleman, who was of our party, †" ſe mit à conter des hiſtoires à Madame l'Abbeſſe."

He told her that my ſiſter and I, though Engliſh women, were Catholics, and wiſhed to be received into the convent,

* Becauſe, ſaid ſhe, the Abbeſs was obliged to riſe from table very ſoon yeſterday, and found herſelf a little indiſpoſed.

† Told a great many fables to the Abbeſs.

vent, and even, if it had been poſſible, to take the vows. The Abbeſs inquired if he was quite ſure of our being Catholics; upon which the gentleman, a little puzzled what to anſwer, inſinuated that Monſ. du F—— had probably the merit of our converſion. "But I have heard," ſaid the Abbeſs, "from Madame ——, that Monſ. du F—— has become a Proteſtant himſelf." Monſ. du F——, who is truth itſelf, avowed his principles without heſitation; while the Abbeſs, turning to La Dépoſitaire, exclaimed, *"Mais comme Monſieur eſt aimable! quels beaux ſentimens! Ah, Monſieur, vous êtes trop bon pour que Dieu vous laiſſe dans l'erreur." "St. Auguſtin," continued ſhe, "had once ſome doubts; I hope you will be a ſecond St. Auguſtin: myſelf, and all my community, will pray for your converſion." La Dépoſitaire,

* How amiable he is! what noble ſentiments! Ah, Sir, you are too good for God to leave you in error.

ſitaire, who was a tall thin old woman, with a ſharp malignant countenance, added, caſting a look on Monſ. du F——, full of the contempt of ſuperior knowledge, "It is not ſurpriſing that a young man, after paſſing ſeveral years in England, that country of heretics, ſhould find his faith ſomewhat ſhaken; but he only wants to be enlightened by Monſ. le Curé de ——, who will immediately diſſipate all his doubts."

From the convent of the Benedictines we went to that of the Carmelites, where religion, which was meant to be a ſource of happineſs in this world, as well as in the next, wears an aſpect of the moſt gloomy horror. When we entered the convent, it ſeemed the reſidence of ſilence and ſolitude; no voice was heard, no human creature appeared; and when we rang the bell, a perſon, whom we could not ſee, inquired, through a hole in the wall, what we wanted. On being

ing informed that we wiſhed to ſpeak to the Supérieure, putting her hand through the hole, ſhe gave us a key, and deſired us to unlock the door of the parloir. This we accordingly did; and in a few minutes the Supérieure came to a thick double grate, with a curtain drawn at the inſide, to prevent the poſſibility of being ſeen. Our French gentleman again talked of our deſire to enter the convent, and begged to know the rules. A hollow voice anſwered, that the Carmelites roſe at four in the morning in ſummer, and five in the winter:—"Obedient ſlumbers, that can wake and weep!"—That they ſlept in their coffins, upon ſtraw, and every morning dug a ſhovel-full of earth for their graves; that they walked to their devotional exerciſes upon their knees; that when any of their friends viſited them, if they ſpoke, they were not ſuffered to be ſeen; or if they were ſeen, they were not

not ſuffered to ſpeak; that with them it was **toujours maigre*, and they only taſted food twice a day.

Our Frenchman ſaid, "†Il faut, Madame, que ces demoiſelles réfléchiſſent ſi cela leur convient." The poor Carmelite agreed that the matter required ſome reflexion, and we departed.

As we returned home meditating on the lot of a Carmelite, we met in the ſtreet three nuns walking in the habit of their order. Upon inquiry, we were told that they had been forced by their parents to take the veil; and, ſince the decree of the National Aſſembly giving them liberty, they had obtained permiſſion to pay a viſit for three months to ſome friends who ſympathiſed in their unhappineſs, and were now on their journey.

The monks and nuns muſt, in a ſhort time,

* Always a faſt.

† Theſe young ladies, Madam, muſt conſider whether theſe regulations will ſuit them.

time, decide whether they will finally leave their cloiſters or not; and the religious houſes which are vacated will be ſold. In the department of Rouen a calculation has been made, that, after paying every monk ſeven hundred, and every nun five hundred livres a year, out of the revenues of the religious houſes, the department will gain ſixty thouſand livres a year. The monks and nuns above ſixty years of age, who chooſe to leave their convents, will be allowed an annual penſion of nine hundred livres.

A letter was read in the National Aſſembly, a few days ago, from a prieſt, intreating that the clergy might have permiſſion to marry; a privilege which, it is thought, the Aſſembly will ſoon authoriſe. *" On a bouleverſé tout," ſaid an old Curé, a fierce Ariſtocrate, with whom I was in company, †" & même on veut porter

* They have overturned every thing.

† And would even carry the profanation ſo far as to ſuffer the prieſts to marry.

porter la profanation ſi loin que de marier les prêtres." It is conjectured, however, that the younger part of the clergy think of this meaſure with leſs horror than the old Curé.

We arrived laſt night at Monſ. du F——'s *château*, without having viſited, during our ſtay at Rouen, the tomb of William the Conqueror, who is buried at Caen, a town thirty leagues diſtant. But I have been too lately at the Champ de Mars, to travel twelve leagues in order to ſee the tomb of a tyrant.

Upon Monſ. du F——'s arrival at the *château*, all his tenants, with their wives and daughters, came to pay their reſpects to Monſeigneur, and were addreſſed by Monſieur and Madame with thoſe endearing epithets which give ſuch a charm to the French language, and are ſo much more rejoicing to the heart than our formal appellations. Here a peaſant girl is termed, by the

lady of the *château*, * "Ma bonne amie, Ma petite, Mon enfant;" while thoſe pretty monoſyllables † *tu*, *ta*, &c. uſed only to the neareſt relations, and to ſervants, impreſs the mind with the idea of that affectionate familiarity, which ſo gracefully ſoftens the diſtance of ſituation, and excites in the dependant, not preſumption, but gratitude. ‡ "Et comment te portes-tu, La Voie? ſaid Monſ. du F—— to one of his farmers. § "Aſſez bien, Monſeigneur," replied he; "mais j'eus la fièvre à Pâques, à votre ſervice."

* My good friend, My little girl, My child.

† Thou, thy, &c.

‡ And how do you do, La Voie?

§ Pretty well, my Lord; but I had a fever laſt Eaſter, at your ſervice.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

I EMBRACE the firſt hours of leiſure, which I have found ſince my arrival at the *château*, to ſend you the hiſtory of my friends.

Auguſtin François Thomas du F——, eldeſt ſon of the Baron du F——, Counſellor of the Parliament of Normandy, was born on the fifteenth of July, 1750. His early years were embittered by the ſeverity of his father, who was of a diſpoſition that preferred the exerciſe of domeſtic tyranny to the bleſſings of ſocial happineſs, and choſe rather to be dreaded than beloved. The endearing name of father conveyed no tranſport to *his* heart, which, being wrapt up in ſtern inſenſibility, was cold even to the common feelings of nature.

The Baron's auſterity was not indeed confined to his ſon, but extended to all

his dependants. Formed by nature for the ſupport of the ancient government of France, he maintained his ariſtocratic rights with unrelenting ſeverity, ruled his feudal tenures with a rod of iron, and conſidered the lower order of people as a ſet of beings whoſe exiſtence was tolerated merely for the uſe of the nobility. The poor, he believed, were only born for ſuffering; and he determined, as far as in him lay, not to deprive them of their natural inheritance. On the whole, if it were the great purpoſe of human life to be hated, perhaps no perſon ever attained that end more completely than the Baron du F——.

His ſon diſcovered early a taſte for literature, and received an education ſuitable to his rank and fortune. As he advanced in life, the treatment he experienced from his father became more and more intolerable to him, as, far from inheriting the ſame character, he poſſeſſed

ed the moſt amiable diſpoſitions, and the moſt feeling heart.

His mother, feeble alike in mind and body, ſubmitted with the helpleſſneſs, and almoſt with the thoughtleſſneſs of a child, to the imperious will of her huſband. Their family was increaſed by two more ſons and two daughters; but theſe children, being ſeveral years younger than Monſ. du F——, were not of an age to afford him the conſolations of friendſhip; and the young man would have found his ſituation intolerable, but for the ſympathy of a perſon in whoſe ſociety every evil was forgotten.

This perſon, his attachment to whom has tinctured the colour of his life, was the youngeſt of eight children, of a reſpectable family of Bourgeois at Rouen. There is great reaſon to believe that her father was deſcended from the younger branch of a noble family of the ſame name, and bearing the ſame arms. But,

unhappily, ſome links were wanting in this chain of honourable parentage. The claim to nobility could not be traced to the entire ſatisfaction of the Baron; who, though he would have diſpenſed with any moral qualities in favour of rank, conſidered obſcure birth as a radical ſtain, which could not be wiped off by all the virtues under Heaven. He looked upon marriage as merely a convention of intereſt, and children as a property, of which it was reaſonable for parents to make the moſt in their power.

The father of Mlle Monique C—— was a farmer, and died three months before the birth of this child; who, with ſeven other children, was educated with the utmoſt care by their mother, a woman of ſenſe and virtue, beloved by all to whom ſhe was known. It ſeemed as if this reſpectable woman had, after the death of her huſband, only ſupported life for the ſake of her infant family, from whom

whom ſhe was ſnatched by death, the moment her maternal cares became no longer neceſſary; her youngeſt daughter, Monique, having, at this period, juſt attained her twentieth year. Upon the death of her mother, Monique went to live with an aunt, with whom ſhe remained only a very ſhort time, being invited by Madame du F——, to whom ſhe was well known, to come and live with her as an humble companion, to read to her when ſhe was diſpoſed to liſten, and to enliven the ſullen grandeur of the *château*, by her animating vivacity.

This young perſon had cultivated her excellent underſtanding by reading, and her heart ſtood in no need of cultivation. Monſ. du F—— found in the charms of her converſation, and in the ſympathy of her friendſhip, the moſt ſoothing conſolation under the rigour of parental tyranny. Living ſeveral years beneath the ſame roof, he had conſtant

opportunities of obſerving her diſpoſition and character; and the paſſion with which ſhe at length inſpired him, was founded on the laſting baſis of eſteem.

If it was ever pardonable to deviate from that law, in the code of intereſt and etiquette, which forbids the heart to liſten to its beſt emotions; which, ſtifling every generous ſentiment of pure diſintereſted attachment, ſacrifices love at the ſhrine of avarice or ambition; the virtues of Monique were ſuch as might excuſe this deviation. Yes, the character, the conduct of this amiable perſon, have nobly juſtified her lover's choice. How long might he have vainly ſought, in the higheſt claſſes of ſociety, a mind ſo elevated above the common maſs!—a mind that, endowed with the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility, has had ſufficient firmneſs to ſuſtain, with a calm and equal ſpirit, every tranſition of fortune, the moſt ſevere trials of adverſity, and perhaps what

what is ſtill more difficult to bear, the trial of high proſperity.

Monſ. du F—— had been taught, by his early misfortunes, that domeſtic happineſs was the firſt good of life. He had already found by experience, the inſufficiency of rank and fortune to confer enjoyment, and he determined to ſeek it in the boſom of conjugal felicity. He determined to paſs his life with her whoſe ſociety now ſeemed eſſential not only to his happineſs, but to his very exiſtence.

At the ſolemn hour of midnight, the young couple went to a church, where they were met by a prieſt whom Monſ. du F—— had made the confident of his attachment, and by whom the marriage ceremony was performed.

Some time after, when the ſituation of his wife obliged Monſ. du F—— to acknowledge their marriage to his mother, ſhe aſſured her ſon that ſhe would

willingly conſent to receive his wife as her daughter, but for the dread of his father's reſentment. Madame du F——, with tears of regret, parted with Monique, whom ſhe placed under the protection of her brothers: they conducted her to Caen, where ſhe was ſoon after delivered of a ſon.

The Baron du F—— was abſent while theſe things were paſſing: he had been ſuſpected of being the author of a pamphlet written againſt the Princes of the Blood, and an order was iſſued to ſeize his papers, and conduct him to the Baſtille; but he found means to eſcape into Holland, where he remained nearly two years. Having made his peace with the Miniſtry, he prepared to come home; but before he returned, Monſ. du F—— received intelligence that his father, irritated almoſt to madneſs by the information of his marriage, was making application for a *lettre-de-cachet*, in order to

confine

confine his daughter-in-law for the reſt of her life; and had alſo obtained power to have his ſon ſeized and impriſoned. Upon this Monſ. du F—— and his wife fled with precipitation to Geneva, leaving their infant at nurſe near Caen. The Genevois ſeemed to think that the unfortunate ſituation of theſe ſtrangers gave them a claim to all the offices of friendſhip. After an interval of many years, I have never heard Monſ. or Madame du F—— recall the kindneſs they received from that amiable people, without tears of tenderneſs and gratitude.

Meanwhile the Baron, having diſcovered the place of his ſon's retreat, obtained, in the name of the King, permiſſion from the Cantons of Berne and Friburg to arreſt them at Lauſanne, where they had retired for ſome months. The wife of le Seigneur Baillif ſecretly gave the young people notice of this deſign; and on the thirtieth of January,

1775, they had juſt time to make their eſcape, with only a few livres in their pockets, and the clothes in which they were dreſſed. Monſ. du F——, upon his firſt going to Switzerland, had lent thirty louis to a friend in diſtreſs. He now, in this moment of neceſſity, deſired to be repaid, and was promiſed the money within a month: mean time, he and his wife wandered from town to town, without finding any place where they could remain in ſecurity. They had ſpent all their ſmall ſtock of money, and were almoſt without clothes: but, at the expiration of the appointed time, the thirty louis were paid; and with this fund Monſ. and Madame du F——— determined to take ſhelter in the only country which could afford them a ſafe aſylum from perſecution, and immediately ſet off for England, travelling through Germany, and part of Holland, to avoid paſſing through France.

They

They embarked at Rotterdam; and, after a long and gloomy paſſage, arrived late at night at London. An old and reſpectable man, who was their fellow-paſſenger, had the charity to procure them a lodging in a garret, and directed them where to purchaſe a few ready-made clothes. When they had remained in this lodging the time neceſſary for becoming pariſhioners, their banns were publiſhed in the church of St. Anne, Weſtminſter, where they were married by the Curate of the pariſh. They then went to the chapel of the French Ambaſſador, and were again married by his Chaplain; after which, Monſ. du F—— told me, *" Les deux époux vinrent faire maigre chère à leur petite chambre."

Monſ. du F—— endeavoured to obtain a ſituation at a ſchool, to teach the French language; but before ſuch a ſituation

* The new-married couple kept a faſt in their little apartment.

ſituation could be found, his wife was delivered of a girl. Not having ſufficient money to hire a nurſe, he attended her himſelf. At this period they endured all the horrors of abſolute want. Unknown and unpitied, without help or ſupport, in a foreign country, and in the depth of a ſevere winter, they almoſt periſhed with cold and hunger. The unhappy mother lay ſtretched upon the ſame bed with her new-born infant, who in vain implored her ſuccour, want of food having dried up that ſource of nouriſhment. The woman at whoſe houſe they lodged, and whom they had for ſome weeks been unable to pay, after many threatenings, at length told them that they muſt depart the next morning. Madame du F—— was at this time ſcarcely able to walk acroſs her chamber, and the ground was covered with ſnow. They had already exhauſted every reſource; they had ſold their watches,

their

their clothes, to ſatisfy the cravings of hunger; every mode of relief was fled—every avenue of hope was cloſed—and they determined to go with their infant to the ſuburbs of the town, and there, ſeated on a ſtone, wait with patience for the deliverance of death. With what anguiſh did this unfortunate couple prepare to leave their laſt miſerable retreat! With how many bitter tears did they bathe that wretched infant, whom they could no longer ſave from periſhing!

Oh, my dear, my ever-beloved friends! when I recollect that I am not at this moment indulging the melancholy caſt of my own diſpoſition, by painting imaginary diſtreſs: when I recollect not only that theſe were real ſufferings, but that they were ſuſtained by *you!* my mind is overwhelmed with its own ſenſations.—The paper is blotted by my tears—and I can hold my pen no longer.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

——— *"THE moral world,
"Which though to us it ſeem perplex'd, moves on
"In higher order; fitted, and impell'd,
"By Wiſdom's fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
"In univerſal good."

Monſ. and Madame du F—— were relieved from this extremity of diſtreſs at a moment ſo critical, and by means ſo unexpected, that it ſeemed the hand of Heaven viſibly interpoſing in behalf of oppreſſed virtue. Early in the morning of that fatal day when they were to leave their laſt ſad ſhelter, Monſ. du F—— went out, and, in the utmoſt diſtraction of mind, wandered through ſome of the ſtreets in the neighbourhood. He was ſtopped by a gentleman whom he had known at Geneva, and who told him that he was then in ſearch of his lodging,

* Thomſon.

lodging, having a letter to deliver to him from a Genevois clergyman. Monſ. du F—— opened the letter, in which he was informed by his friend, that, fearing he might be involved in difficulties, he had tranſmitted ten guineas to a banker in London, and intreated Monſ. du F—— would accept that ſmall relief, which was all he could afford, as a teſtimony of friendſhip. Monſ. du F—— flew to the banker's, received the money as the gift of Heaven, and then, haſtening to his wife and child, bade them live a little longer.

A ſhort time after, he obtained a ſituation as French uſher at a ſchool; and Madame du F——, when ſhe had a little recovered her ſtrength, put out her infant to nurſe, and procured the place of French teacher at a boarding-ſchool. They were now enabled to ſupport their child, and to repay the generous aſſiſtance of their kind friend at Geneva.

Monſ.

Monſ. and Madame du F—— paſſed two years in this ſituation, when they were again plunged into the deepeſt diſtreſs. A French jeweller was commiſſioned by the Baron du F—— to go to his ſon, and propoſe to him conditions of reconciliation. This man told Monſ. du F—— that his father was juſt recovered from a ſevere and dangerous illneſs, and that his eldeſt daughter had lately died. Theſe things, he ſaid, had led him to reflect with ſome pain on the ſeverity he had exerciſed towards his ſon; that the feelings of a parent were awakened in his boſom; and that, if Monſ. du F—— would throw himſelf at his father's feet, and aſk forgiveneſs, he would not fail to obtain it, and would be allowed a penſion, on which he might live with his wife in England. In confirmation of theſe aſſurances, this man produced ſeveral letters which he had received from the Baron to that effect; who,

as

as a farther proof of his ſincerity, had given this agent ſeven hundred pounds to put into the hands of Monſ. du F—— for the ſupport of his wife and child during his abſence. The agent told him, that he had not been able to bring the money to England, but would immediately give him three draughts upon a merchant of reputation in London, with whom he had connexions in buſineſs; the firſt draught payable in three months, the ſecond in ſix, and the third in nine.

Monſ. du F—— long deliberated upon theſe propoſals. He knew too well the vindictive ſpirit of his father, not to feel ſome dread of putting himſelf into his power. But his agent continued to give him the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of ſafety; and Monſ. du F—— thought it was not improbable that his ſiſter's death might have ſoftened the mind of his father. He reflected that his marriage had diſappointed thoſe ambitious hopes of a

great

great alliance which his father had fondly indulged, and to whom he owed at leaſt the reparation of haſtening to implore his forgiveneſs when he was willing to beſtow it. What alſo weighed ſtrongly on his mind, was the conſideration that the ſum which his father had offered to depoſit for the uſe of his wife, would, in caſe any ſiniſter accident ſhould befall him, afford a ſmall proviſion for her and his infant.

The reſult of theſe deliberations was that Monſ. du F—— determined (and who can much blame his want of prudence?) he determined to confide in a father!—to truſt in that inſtinctive affection, which, far from being connected with any peculiar ſenſibility of mind, it requires only to be a parent to feel—an affection, which, not confined to the human heart, ſoftens the ferociouſneſs of the tiger, and ſpeaks with a voice that is heard amidſt the howlings of the deſert.

Monſ. du F——, after the repeated promiſes

promiſes of his father, almoſt conſidered that ſuſpicion which ſtill hung upon his mind, as a crime. But, leſt it might be poſſible that this agent was commiſſioned to deceive him, he endeavoured to melt him into compaſſion for his ſituation. He went to the village where his child was at nurſe, and, bringing her ſix miles in his arms, preſented her to this man, telling him, that the fate of that poor infant reſted upon his integrity. The man took the innocent creature in his arms, kiſſed her, and then, returning her to her father, renewed all his former aſſurances. Monſ. du F—— liſtened and believed. Alas! how difficult is it for a good heart to ſuſpect human nature of crimes which make one bluſh for the ſpecies! How hard is it for a mind glowing with benevolence, to believe that the boſom of another harbours the malignity of a demon!

Monſ. du F—— now fixed the time for his

his departure with his father's agent, who was to accompany him to Normandy. Madame du F—— ſaw the preparations for his journey with anguiſh which ſhe could ill conceal; but ſhe felt that the delicacy of her ſituation forbad her interference. It was ſhe who had made him an alien from his family, and an exile from his country: it was for her, that, renouncing rank, fortune, friends, and connexions, all that is eſteemed moſt valuable in life, he had ſuffered the laſt extremity of want, and now ſubmitted to a ſtate of drudgery and dependance. Would he not have a right to reproach her weakneſs, if ſhe attempted to oppoſe his reconciliation with his father, and exerted that influence which ſhe poſſeſſed over his mind, in order to detain him in a ſituation ſo remote from his former expectations? She was, therefore, ſenſible that the duty, the gratitude ſhe owed her huſband, now required, on her part,

part, the abſolute ſacrifice of her own feelings: ſhe ſuffered without complaint, and endeavoured to reſign herſelf to the will of Heaven.

The day before his departure, Monſ. du F—— went to take leave of his little girl. At this moment a dark and melancholy preſage ſeemed to agitate his mind. He preſſed the child for a long while to his boſom, and bathed it with his tears. The nurſe eagerly inquired what was the matter, and aſſured him that the child was perfectly well. Monſ. du F—— had no power to reply: he continued claſping his infant in his arms, and at length, tearing himſelf from her in ſilence, he ruſhed out of the houſe.

When the morning of his departure came, Madame du F——, addreſſing herſelf to his fellow-traveller, ſaid to him, with a voice of ſupplication, "I entruſt you, Sir, with my huſband, with the father of my poor infant, our ſole protector

protector and support!—have compaſſion on the widow and the orphan!". The man, caſting upon her a gloomy look, gave her a cold anſwer, which made her ſoul ſhrink within her. When Monſ. du F—— got into the Brighthelmſtone ſtage, he was unable to bid her farewell; but when the carriage drove off, he put his head out of the window, and continued looking after her, while ſhe fixed her eyes on him, and might have repeated with Imogen,

" I would have broke mine eye-ſtrings,
" Crack'd them, but to look upon him; till the
" diminution
" Of ſpace had pointed him ſharp as my needle:
" Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from
" The ſmallneſs of a gnat to air; and then—
" Then turn'd mine eye, and wept!"

When the carriage was out of ſight, ſhe ſummoned all her ſtrength, and walked with trembling ſteps to the ſchool where ſhe lived as a teacher. With much difficulty

ficulty ſhe reached the door; but her limbs could ſupport her no longer, and ſhe fell down ſenſeleſs at the threſhold. She was carried into the houſe, and reſtored to life and the ſenſations of miſery.

LETTER XVIII.

MONS. du F—— arrived at his father's *château* in Normandy, in June 1778, and was received by Monſ. le Baron, and all his family, with the moſt affectionate cordiality. In much exultation of mind, he diſpatched a letter to Madame du F——, containing this agreeable intelligence; but his letter was far from producing in her mind the effect he deſired. A deep melancholy had ſeized her thoughts, and her foreboding heart refuſed to ſympathiſe in his joy. Short, indeed, was its duration. He had not been many days at the *château*, when he perceived, with ſurpriſe and conſternation, that his ſteps were continually watched by two ſervants armed with fuſees.

His father now ſhewed him an *arrêt*, which, on the 4th of June, 1776, he had obtained from the Parliament of Rouen againſt

againſt his marriage. The Baron then ordered his ſon to accompany him to his houſe at Rouen, whither they went, attended by ſeveral ſervants. That evening, when the attendants withdrew after ſupper, the Baron, entirely throwing off the maſk of civility and kindneſs which he had worn in ſuch oppoſition to his nature, reproached his ſon, in terms of the utmoſt bitterneſs, for his paſt conduct, inveighed againſt his marriage, and, after having exhauſted every expreſſion of rage and reſentment, at length ſuffered him to retire to his own apartment.

There the unhappy Monſ. du F——, abſorbed in the moſt gloomy reflexions, lamented in vain that fatal credulity which had led him to put himſelf into the power of his implacable father. At the hour of midnight his meditations were interrupted by the ſound of feet approaching his chamber; and in a few moments the door was thrown open, and

his father, attended by a ſervant armed, and two * *Cavaliers de Maréchauſſée*, entered the room. Reſiſtance and ſupplication were alike unavailing. Monſ. du F——'s papers were ſeized; a few louis d'ors, which conſtituted all the money he poſſeſſed, were taken from him; and he was conducted in the dead of night, July the 17th, 1778, to St. Yon, a convent uſed as a place of confinement near Rouen, where he was thrown into a dungeon.

A week after, his father entered the dungeon. You will perhaps conclude that his hard heart felt at length the relentings of a parent: you will at leaſt ſuppoſe, that his imagination being haunted, and his conſcience tormented, with the image of a ſon ſtretched on the floor of this ſubterraneous cell, he could ſupport the idea no longer, and had haſtened to give repoſe to his own mind by releaſing

* Officers of Juſtice.

leaſing his captive. Far different were the motives of his viſit. He conſidered that ſuch was his ſon's attachment to his wife, that, ſo long as he believed he had left her in poſſeſſion of ſeven hundred pounds, he would find comfort from that conſideration, even in the depth of his dungeon. His father, therefore, haſtened to remove an error from the mind of his ſon, which left the meaſure of his woes unfilled. Nor did he chooſe to yield to another the office of inflicting a pang ſharper than captivity; but himſelf informed his ſon, that the merchant who was to pay the ſeven hundred pounds to his wife, was declared a bankrupt.

A ſhort time after, the Baron du F—— commenced a ſuit at law againſt that agent of iniquity whom he had employed to deceive his ſon, and who, practiſing a refinement of treachery of which the Baron was not aware, had kept the ſeven hundred pounds with which he was in-

truſted, and given drafts upon a merchant who he knew would fail before the time of payment. Not being able to proſecute this affair without a power of attorney from his ſon, the Baron applied to him for that purpoſe; but Monſ. du F——, being firmly reſolved not to deprive his wife of the chance of recovering the money for herſelf and her child, could by no treaties or menaces be led to comply. In vain his father, who had conſented to allow him a few books, ordered him to be deprived of that reſource, and that his confinement ſhould be rendered ſtill more rigorous; he continued inflexible.

Monſ. du F—— remained in his priſon without meeting with the ſmalleſt mark of ſympathy from any one of his family, though his ſecond brother, Monſ. de B——, was now eighteen years of age; an age at which the ſordid conſiderations of intereſt, how much ſoever they

they may affect our conduct at a more advanced period of life, can ſeldom ſtifle thoſe warm and generous feelings which ſeem to belong to youth. It might have been expected that this young man would have abhorred the proſpect of poſſeſſing a fortune which was the juſt inheritance of his brother, and which could only be obtained by detaining that brother in perpetual captivity. Even admitting that his inexorable father prohibited his viſiting the priſon of his brother, his heart ſhould have told him, that diſobedience, in this inſtance, would have been a virtue: or, was it not ſufficient to remain a paſſive ſpectator of injuſtice, without becoming, as he afterwards did, the agent of cruelty inflicted on a brother?

Where are the words that can convey an adequate idea of the ſufferings of Madame du F—— during this period? Three weeks after her huſband's departure from England, ſhe heard the general

report of the town of Rouen, that the Baron du F—— had obtained a *lettre-de-cachet* againſt his ſon, and thrown him into priſon. This was all ſhe heard of her huſband for the ſpace of two years. Ignorant of the place of his confinement, uncertain if he ſtill lived, perhaps her miſeries were even more poignant than his. In the diſmal ſolitude of a priſon, his pains were alleviated by the ſoothing reflexion that he ſuffered for her he loved; while that very idea was to her the moſt bitter aggravation of diſtreſs. Her days paſſed in anguiſh, which can only be conceived where it has been felt; and her nights were diſturbed by the gloomy wanderings of fancy. Sometimes ſhe ſaw him in her dreams chained to the floor of his dungeon, his boſom bathed in blood, and his countenance disfigured by death: ſometimes ſhe ſaw him haſtening towards her, when, at the moment that he was going

to

to embrace her, they were fiercely torn aſunder. Madame du F—— was naturally of a delicate conſtitution; and grief of mind reduced her to ſuch a deplorable ſtate of weakneſs, that it was with infinite difficulty ſhe performed the duties of her ſituation. For herſelf, ſhe would have welcomed death with thankfulneſs; but ſhe conſidered that her child now depended entirely on her labours for ſupport: and this was a motive ſufficiently powerful to prompt her to the careful preſervation of her own life, though it had long become a burden. The child was three years old when her father left England; recollected him perfectly; and, whenever her mother went to viſit her, uſed to call with eagerneſs for her papa. The inquiry, in the voice of her child, of, "When ſhall I ſee my dear, dear papa?" was heard by this unhappy mother with a degree of agony which it were vain indeed to deſcribe.

LETTER XIX.

MONS. du F—— was repeatedly offered his liberty, but upon conditions which he abhorred. He was required for ever to renounce his wife; who, while she remained with her child in a distant country, was to receive from his father a small pension, as an equivalent for the pangs of disappointed affection, of disgrace and dishonour. With the indignation of offended virtue he spurned at these insulting propositions, and endeavoured to prepare his mind for the endurance of perpetual captivity.

Nor can imagination form an idea of a scene more dreadful than his prison, where he perceived with horror that the greatest number of those prisoners, who had been many years in confinement, had an appearance of frenzy in their looks,

looks, which ſhewed that reaſon had been too weak for the long ſtruggle with calamity, and had at laſt yielded to deſpair. In a cell adjoining Monſ. du F——'s, was an old man who had been confined nearly forty years. His grey beard hung down to his waiſt; and, during the day, he was chained by his neck to the wall. He was never allowed to leave his cell, and never ſpoke; but Monſ. du F—— uſed to hear the rattling of his chains.

The priſoners, a few excepted, were generally brought from their cells at the hour of noon, and dined together. But this gloomy repaſt was ſerved in uninterrupted ſilence. They were not ſuffered to utter one word; and the penalty of tranſgreſſing this rule, was a rigorous confinement of ſeveral weeks. As ſoon as this comfortleſs meal was finiſhed, the priſoners were inſtantly obliged to return to their dungeons, in which they

were locked up till the ſame hour the following day. Monſ. du F——, in his damp and melancholy cell, paſſed two winters without fire, and ſuffered ſo ſeverely from cold, that he was obliged to wrap himſelf up in the few clothes which covered his bed. Nor was he allowed any light, except that which during the ſhort day beamed through the ſmall grated window in the cieling of his dungeon.

Is it not difficult to believe that theſe ſufferings were inflicted by a father? A father!——that name which I cannot trace without emotion; which conveys all the ideas of protection, of ſecurity, of tenderneſs; that dear relation to which, in general, children owe their proſperity, their enjoyments, and even their virtues!—Alas, the unhappy Monſ. du F—— owed nothing to *his* father, but that life, which from its earlieſt period his cruelty had embittered, and which he

he now condemned to languiſh in miſeries that death only could heal.

A young gentleman, who was confined in a cell on one ſide of Monſ. du F——'s, contrived to make a ſmall hole through the wall; and theſe companions in misfortune, by placing themſelves cloſe to the hole, could converſe together in whiſpers. But the Monks were not long in diſcovering this, and effectually deprived them of ſo great an indulgence, by removing them to diſtant cells. Theſe unrelenting Monks, who performed with ſuch fidelity their office of tormenting their fellow-creatures, who never relaxed in one article of perſecution, and adhered with ſcrupulous rigour to the code of cruelty, were called * "Les Frères de la ſainte Charité." One among them deſerved the appellation. This good old Monk uſed to viſit the priſoners by ſtealth, and endeavour to

* The Brothers of the Holy Charity.

to adminiſter comfort to their affliction. Often he repeated to Monſ. du F——, * "Mon cher frère, conſolez-vous; mettez votre confiance en Dieu; vos maux ſeront finis!"

Monſ. du F—— remained two years in priſon without receiving any intelligence of his wife, on whoſe account he ſuffered the moſt diſtracting anxiety. He had reaſon to apprehend that her frame, which had already been enfeebled by her misfortunes, would ſink beneath this additional load of miſery, and that ſhe would perhaps be rendered unable to procure that little pittance which might preſerve herſelf and her child from want. At length one of his fellow-priſoners, who was going to regain his liberty, took charge of a letter to Madame du F——, and flattered him with

* My dear brother, be comforted; place your confidence in God; your afflictions will have an end.

with the hope of finding ſome means of tranſmitting to him an anſwer.

The letter paints ſo naturally the ſituation of his mind, that I have tranſlated ſome extracts from it.

"My thoughts," he ſays, "are unceaſingly occupied about you, and my dear little girl. I am for ever recalling the bleſſed moments when I had the happineſs of being near you, and at that recollection my tears refuſe to be controuled. How could I conſent to ſeparate myſelf from what was moſt dear to me in the world? No motive leſs powerful than that of ſeeking your welfare, and that of my child, could have determined me—and alas! I have not accompliſhed this end. I know too well that you have never received that ſum of money which I thought I had ſecured for you, and for which I riſked the firſt bleſſing of life. What fills my mind with the greateſt horror,

in

in the ſolitude of my priſon, is the fear that you are ſuffering difficulties in a foreign country. Here I remain ignorant of your fate, and can only offer to Heaven the moſt ardent vows for your welfare.

"What joy would a letter from you give me! but I dare not flatter myſelf with the hope of ſuch ſweet conſolation. All I can aſſure myſelf of is, that though ſeparated, perhaps for ever, our ſouls are united by the moſt tender friendſhip and attachment. Perhaps I may not find it poſſible to write to you again for a long while; but be aſſured that no menaces, no ſufferings, no dungeons, ſhall ever ſhake my fidelity to you, and that I ſhall love you to the laſt hour of my exiſtence. I find a conſolation in the reflexion that it is for you I ſuffer. If Providence ever permits us to meet again, that moment will efface the remembrance of all my calamities.

calamities. Live, my deareſt wife, in that hope. I conjure you to preſerve your life for my ſake, and for the ſake of our dear little girl! Embrace her tenderly for me, and deſire her alſo to embrace you for her poor papa. I need not recommend my child to the care of ſo tender a mother; but I conjure you to inſpire her mind with the deepeſt ſenſe of religion. If ſhe is born to inherit the misfortunes of her father, this will be her beſt ſource of conſolation.

" Whatever offers may be made you by my father, I exhort you, never have the weakneſs to liſten to them, but preſerve your rights, and thoſe of my dear little girl, which, perhaps, may one day be of ſome value. If you are ſtill at Mrs. D——'s boarding-ſchool, tell her that I recommend my wife and child to her compaſſion. ——— But what am I ſaying? I am ignorant if you

you are ſtill with her, ignorant whether the deareſt objects of my affection ſtill live! But I truſt that Providence has preſerved you. Adieu! May God Almighty bleſs you, and my child! I never ceaſe imploring him to have pity on the widow and the orphan in a land of ſtrangers."

LETTER

LETTER XX.

YOU, my dear friend, who have felt the tender attachments of love and friendſhip, and the painful anxieties which abſence occaſions, even amidſt ſcenes of variety and pleaſure; who underſtand the value at which tidings from thoſe we love is computed in the arithmetic of the heart; who have heard with almoſt uncontroulable emotion the poſtman's rap at the door; have trembling ſeen the well-known hand which excited ſenſations that almoſt deprived you of power to break the ſeal which ſeemed the taliſman of happineſs; you can judge of the feelings of Monſ. du F—— when he received, by means of the ſame friend who had conveyed his letter, an anſwer from his wife. But the perſon who brought the letter to his dungeon, dreading the riſk of a diſcovery, inſiſted,

ſiſted, that, after having read it, he ſhould return it to him immediately. Monſ. du F—— preſſed the letter to his heart, bathed it with his tears, and implored the indulgence of keeping it at leaſt till the next morning. He was allowed to do ſo, and read it till every word was imprinted on his memory; and after enjoying the ſad luxury of holding it that night on his boſom, was forced the next morning to relinquiſh his treaſure.

On the 10th of October, 1780, the Baron du F—— came to the convent, and ordered the Monks to bring his ſon from his dungeon to the parloir, and leave them together. With the utmoſt reluctance Monſ. du F—— obeyed this ſummons, having long loſt all hope of ſoftening the obdurate heart of his father. When the Monks withdrew, the Baron began upbraiding him in the moſt bitter terms, for his obſtinate reſiſtance to his will, which, he informed him, had availed

availed nothing, as he had gained his ſuit at law, and recovered the ſeven hundred pounds. Monſ. du F—— replied, that the pain he felt from this intelligence would have been far more acute, had his wife been deprived, with his concurrence, of the money which was promiſed for her ſubſiſtence, and on the reliance of which promiſe he had been tempted to leave England. His father then inquired if he ſtill perſiſted in his adherence to the diſgraceful connexion he had formed; to which his ſon anſwered, that not merely were his affections intereſted, but that his honour obliged him to maintain, with inviolable fidelity, a ſolemn and ſacred engagement. The rage of the Baron, at theſe words, became unbounded: he ſtamped the ground with his feet; he aimed a ſtroke at his ſon, who, taking advantage of this moment of frenzy, determined to attempt his eſcape; and, ruſhing out of the apartment, and avoiding

avoiding that ſide of the convent which the Monks inhabited, he endeavoured to find his way to the garden, but miſſed the paſſage which led to it. He then flew up a ſtair-caſe, from which he heard the voice of his father calling for aſſiſtance. Finding that all the doors which he paſſed were ſhut, he continued aſcending till he reached the top of the building, where, meeting with no other opening than a hole made in the ſloping roof to let in light to a garret, he climbed up with much difficulty, and then putting his feet through the hole, and letting his body out by degrees, he ſupported himſelf for a moment on the roof, and deliberated on what he was about to do. But his mind was, at this criſis, wrought up to a pitch of deſperation, which mocked the ſuggeſtions of fear. He quitted his hold, and, flinging himſelf from a height of nearly fifty feet, became inſenſible before he reached the ground,

ground, where he lay weltering in his blood, and to all appearance dead.

He had fallen on the high road leading from Rouen to Caen. Some people who were paſſing gathered round him; and one perſon having waſhed the blood from his face, inſtantly recognized his features, and exclaimed to the aſtoniſhed crowd, that he was the eldeſt ſon of the Baron du F——. Upon examining his body, it was found that he had broken his arm, his thigh, his ancle-bone, and his heel, beſides having received many violent bruiſes. He ſtill remained in a ſtate of inſenſibility; and, while theſe charitable ſtrangers were uſing their efforts to reſtore him to life, the Monks haſtened from their convent, ſnatched their victim from thoſe good Samaritans who would have poured oil and wine into his wounds, and carried him to the infirmary of the convent, where he remained ſome weeks before he recovered his ſenſes; after which he lay ſtretched upon

upon a bed for three months, ſuffering agonies of pain.

His father, who had been the jailor, and almoſt the murderer of his ſon, heard of theſe ſufferings without remorſe, nor did he ever ſee him more. But, though he was ſufficiently obdurate to hear unmoved the calamities he had inflicted on his child, though he could check the upbraidings of his own conſcience, he could not ſilence the voice of public indignation. The report that Monſ. du F—— had been found lying on the road bathed in blood, and had in that condition been dragged to the priſon of St. Yon, was ſoon ſpread through the town of Rouen. Every one ſympathized in the fate of this unfortunate young man, and execrated the tyranny of his unrelenting father.

The univerſal clamour reached the ear of his brother, Monſ. de B——, who now, for the firſt time, out of reſpect to the

the public opinion, took a meaſure, which his heart had never dictated during the long captivity of his brother, that of viſiting him in priſon. Monſ. de B——'s deſign in theſe viſits was merely to appeaſe the public; for ſmall indeed was the conſolation they afforded to his brother. He did not come to bathe with his tears the bed where that unhappy young man lay ſtretched in pain and anguiſh; to lament the ſeverity of his father; to offer him all the conſolation of fraternal tenderneſs:—he came to warn him againſt indulging a hope of ever regaining his liberty—he came to pierce his ſoul with "hard unkindneſs' alter'd eye, which mocks the tear it forc'd to flow."

I will not attempt to deſcribe the wretchedneſs of Madame du F——, when ſhe heard the report of her huſband's ſituation. Your heart will conceive what ſhe ſuffered far better than

I can relate it. Three months after his fall, Monſ. du F—— contrived, through the aſſiſtance of the charitable old monk, to ſend her a few lines written with his left hand. "My fall" (he ſays) "has made my captivity known, and has led the whole town of Rouen to take an intereſt in my misfortunes. Perhaps I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the accident, which may poſſibly prove the means of procuring me my liberty, and uniting me again to you!—In the mean time, I truſt that Providence will watch with paternal goodneſs over the two objects of my moſt tender affection. Do not, my deareſt wife, ſuffer the thoughts of my ſituation to prey too much upon your mind. My arm is almoſt well: my thigh and foot are not quite cured; but I am getting better.

"I could not ſuppreſs my tears on reading that part of your letter wherein you tell me that my dear little girl often

aſks for her papa.—Kiſs her for me a thouſand times, and tell her that her papa is always thinking of her and her dear mama. I am well convinced that you will give her the beſt education your little pittance can afford: but above all, I beſeech you, inſpire her young mind with ſentiments of piety: teach her to love her Creator: that is the moſt eſſential of all leſſons. Adieu, deareſt and moſt beloved of women! Is there a period in reſerve when we ſhall meet again? Oh, how amply will that moment compenſate for all our misfortunes!"

LETTER XXI.

AT length the Parliament of Rouen began to intereſt itſelf in the cauſe of Monſ. du F——. The circumſtances of his confinement were mentioned in that Aſſembly, and the Preſident ſent his Secretary to Monſ. du F——'s priſon, who had now quitted his bed, and was able to walk with the aſſiſtance of crutches. By the advice of the Preſident, Monſ. du F—— addreſſed ſome letters to the Parliament, repreſenting his ſituation in the moſt pathetic terms, and imploring their interference in his behalf.

It is here neceſſary to mention, that Monſ. de Bel B——, *Procureur-Général de Rouen*, being intimately connected with the Baron du F——'s family, had ventured to demonſtrate his friendſhip for the Baron, by confining his ſon nearly three years on his own authority, and

without

without any *lettre-de-cachet*. And, though Monſ. de Bel B—— well knew that every ſpecies of oppreſſion was connived at, under the ſhelter of *lettres-de-cachet*, he was ſenſible that it was only beneath their auſpices that the exerciſe of tyranny was permitted; and in this particular inſtance, not having been cruel **ſelon les règles*, he apprehended, that if ever Monſ. du F—— regained his liberty, he might be made reſponſible for his conduct. He therefore exerted all his influence, and with too much ſucceſs, to fruſtrate the benevolent intention of the Preſident of the Parliament, reſpecting Monſ. du F——. His letters were indeed read in that Aſſembly, and ordered to be regiſtered, where they ſtill remain a record of the puſillanimity of thoſe men who ſuffered the authority of Monſ. de Bel B—— to overcome the voice of humanity; who acknowledged

* According to rules.

the atrocity of the Baron du F——'s conduct, and yet were deaf to the ſupplications of his ſon, while, from the depth of his dungeon, he called upon them for protection and redreſs.

May the fate of the captive, in the land of France, no more hang ſuſpended on the frail thread of the pity or the caprice of individuals! May Juſtice erect, on eternal foundations, her protecting ſanctuary for the oppreſſed! and may humanity and mercy be the graceful decorations of her temple!

The Baron du F—— perceived that, notwithſtanding his machinations had prevented the Parliament of Rouen from taking any effectual meaſures towards liberating his ſon, it would be impoſſible to ſilence the murmurs of the public, while he remained confined at St. Yon. He determined, therefore, to remove him to ſome diſtant priſon, where his name and family were unknown; and

where,

where, beyond the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Rouen, his groans might rise unpitied and unavenged. But the Baron, not daring, amidst the general clamour, to remove his son by force, endeavoured to draw him artfully into the snare he had prepared.

Monf. de B—— was sent to his brother's prison, where he represented to him, that, though he must not indulge the least hope of ever regaining his liberty, yet, if he would write a letter to Monf. M——, Keeper of the Seals, desiring to be removed to some other place, his confinement should be made far less rigorous. Monf. du F—— was now in a state of desperation, which rendered him almost careless of his fate. He perceived that the Parliament had renounced his cause: he saw no possibility of escape from St. Yon; and flattered himself, that in a place where he was less closely confined, it might perhaps be

practicable: and therefore he conſented to write the letter required, which Monſ. de B—— conveyed in triumph to his father. There were, however, ſome expreſſions in the letter which the Baron diſapproved; on which account he returned it, deſiring that thoſe expreſſions might be changed. But, during the interval of his brother's abſence, Monſ. du F—— had reflected on the raſh imprudence of confiding in the promiſes of thoſe by whom he had been ſo cruelly deceived. No ſooner, therefore, did Monſ. de B—— put the letter again into his hands, than he tore it into pieces, and peremptorily refuſed to write another.

Soon after this, Monſ. de B——, the ambaſſador of the tyrant, again returned to his brother with freſh credentials, and declared to him, that if he would write to the Keeper of the Seals, deſiring to be removed from St. Yon, he ſhould, in one fortnight after his removal, be reſtored

ſtored to liberty. Upon Monſ. du F——'s aſſerting that he could no longer confide in the promiſes made him by his family; his brother, in a formal written engagement, to which he ſigned his name, gave him the moſt ſolemn aſſurance, that this promiſe ſhould be fulfilled with fidelity. Monſ. du F—— deſired a few days for deliberation; and, during that interval, found means of conſulting a magiſtrate of Roüen, who was his friend, and who adviſed him to comply with the terms that were offered, after having cauſed ſeveral copies of the written engagement to be taken, and certified by ſuch of the priſoners at St. Yon as were likely to regain their freedom; a precaution neceſſary, leſt his own copy ſhould be torn from his hands.

Thus, having neither truſted to the affection, the mercy, or the remorſe of thoſe within whoſe boſoms ſuch ſentiments were extinguiſhed; having bar-

gained, by a written agreement, with a father and a brother, for his releaſe from the horrors of perpetual captivity, Monſ. du F—— wrote the letter required.

Soon after, an order was ſent from Verſailles for his releaſe from the priſon of St. Yon, and with it a *lettre-de-cachet*, whereby he was exiled to Beauvais, with a command not to leave that town. Monſ. de B——, acting as a **Cavalier de la Maréchauſſée*, conducted his brother to this place of exile, and there left him. A ſhort time after, Monſ. du F—— received an intimation from that magiſtrate of Rouen who had intereſted himſelf in his misfortunes, that his father was on the point of obtaining another *lettre-de-cachet*, to remove him from Beauvais to ſome priſon in the ſouth of France, where he might never more be heard of. This gentleman added, that Monſ. du F—— had not one moment

to

* An officer of juſtice.

to loſe, and adviſed him immediately to attempt his eſcape.

Early on the morning after he received this intelligence, Monſ. du F——, who had the liberty to walk about the town, fled from Beauvais. The perſon who brought him the letter from the magiſtrate, waited for him at a little diſtaince from the town, and accompanied him on his journey. When they reached Liſle in Flanders, not having a paſſport, they were obliged to wait from eleven o'clock at night till ten the next morning, before they could obtain permiſſion from the Governor to proceed on their journey. Monſ. du F—— concluded that he was purſued, and ſuffered the moſt dreadful apprehenſions of being overtaken. His companion, with ſome addreſs, at length obtained a paſſport, and attended him as far as Oſtend. The wind proving contrary, he was detained two days in a ſtate of the moſt diſtract-

ing inquietude, and concealed himself on board the veſſel on which he had taken his paſſage for England. At length the wind became favourable; the veſſel ſailed, and arrived late in the night at Margate. Monſ. du F——, when he reached the Engliſh ſhore, knelt down, and, in a tranſport of joy, kiſſed the earth of that dear country which had twice proved his aſylum.

He then inquired when the ſtage-coach ſet off for London, and was told that it went at ſo early an hour the next morning, that he could not go till the day after, as he muſt wait till his portmanteau was examined by the cuſtom-houſe officers, who were now in bed. The delay of a few hours in ſeeing his wife and child, after ſuch an abſence, after ſuch ſufferings, was not to be endured: in a violent agitation of mind, he ſnatched up his portmanteau, and was going to fling it into the ſea, when he was

prevented

prevented by the people near him, who ſaid, that if he would pay the fees, his portmanteau ſhould be ſent after him. He eagerly complied with their demands, and ſet out for London. As he drew near, his anxiety, his impatience, his emotion increaſed. His preſent ſituation appeared to him like one of thoſe delicious dreams, which ſometimes viſited the darkneſs of his dungeon, and for a while reſtored him, in imagination, to thoſe he loved. Scarcely could he perſuade himſelf that he was beyond the reach of oppreſſion; that he was in a land of freedom; that he was haſtening every moment towards his wife and child. When he entered London, his ſenſations became almoſt too ſtrong to bear. He was in the very ſame place which his wife and child inhabited—but were they yet alive? were they in health? had Heaven indeed reſerved for him the tranſport of holding them once more to

his

his boſom, of mixing his tears with theirs? When he knocked at the door of the houſe where he expected to hear of Madame du F——, he had ſcarcely power to articulate his inquiries after her and his child. He was told that they were in health, but that Madame du F——, being in a ſituation ſix miles from London, he could not ſee her till the next morning. Monſ. du F—— had not been in a bed for ſeveral nights, and was almoſt overcome with agitation and fatigue. He, however, inſtantly ſet out on foot for the habitation of his wife, announced himſelf to the miſtreſs of the family, and remained in another apartment, while ſhe, after making Madame du F—— promiſe that ſhe would liſten to her with calmneſs, told her, that there was a probability of her huſband's return to England. He heard the ſobs, the exclamations of his wife, at this intelligence—he could reſtrain no longer

—he

—he ruſhed into the room—he flew into her arms—he continued preſſing her in ſilence to his boſom. She was unable to ſhed a tear; and it was not till after he had long endeavoured to ſoothe her by his tenderneſs, and had talked to her of her child, that ſhe obtained relief from weeping. She then, with the moſt violent emotion, again and again repeated the ſame inquiries, and was a conſiderable time before ſhe recovered any degree of compoſure.

All the fortune Monſ. du F—— poſſeſſed when he reached London, was one half guinea; but his wife had, during his abſence, ſaved ten guineas out of her little ſalary. You will eaſily imagine how valuable this hoard became in her eſtimation, when ſhe could apply it to the precious uſe of relieving the neceſſities of her huſband. Monſ. du F—— went to London the next day, and hired a little garret: there, with a few books, a ruſh-light, and ſome ſtraw in which he wrapped

wrapped his legs to ſupply the want of fire, he recollected not the ſplendour to which he had once been accuſtomed; but the dungeon from which he had eſcaped. He ſaw his wife and child once a week; and, in thoſe ſolitary moments when books failed to ſoothe his thoughts, he anticipated the hour in which he ſhould again meet the objects moſt dear to his heart, and paſſed the intervals of time in philoſophic reſignation. His clothes being too ſhabby to admit of his appearing in the day, he iſſued from his little ſhed when it was dark, and endeavoured to warm himſelf by the exerciſe of walking.

Unfortunately he caught the ſmall-pox; and his diſorder roſe to ſuch a height, that his life was deſpaired of. In his delirium he uſed to recapitulate the ſad ſtory of his misfortunes; and when he ſaw any perſon near his bed-ſide, would call out, with the utmoſt vehemence,

"Qu'on

* "Qu'on faſſe ſortir tous les François!" After having been for ſome days in the moſt imminent danger, Monſ. du F—— recovered from this diſeaſe.

LETTER XXII.

SIX months after Monſ. du F——'s return to England, his family found themſelves compelled to ſilence the public clamours, by allowing him a ſmall annual penſion. Upon this, Madame du F—— quitted her place, and came to live with her huſband and her child in an obſcure lodging. Their little income received ſome addition by means of teaching the French language in a few private families.

A young lady, who came to pay me a viſit at London in 1785, deſired to take ſome leſſons in French, and Madame du F—— was commended to us for that purpoſe.

* Make all the French go out.

purpoſe. We ſoon perceived in her converſation every mark of a cultivated mind, and of an amiable diſpoſition. She at length told us the hiſtory of her misfortunes, with the pathetic eloquence of her own charming language; and, after having heard that recital, it required but common humanity, to treat her with the reſpect due to the unhappy, and to feel for her ſorrows that ſympathy to which they had ſuch claim. How much has the ſenſibility of Monſ. and Madame du F—— over-rated thoſe proofs of eſteem and friendſhip which we were enabled to ſhew them in their adverſity!—But I muſt not anticipate.

On the 7th of October, 1787, the Baron died, leaving, beſides Monſ. du F——, two other ſons, and a daughter.

I muſt here mention, that at the time when Monſ. du F—— was confined to his bed in the priſon of St. Yon, from the conſequences of his fall, his father, in order to avoid the clamours at Rouen, went

went for ſome weeks to Paris. He there made a will, diſinheriting his eldeſt ſon. By the old laws of France, however, a father could not puniſh his ſon more than once for the ſame offence. Nor was there any thing in ſo mild a clauſe that could much encourage diſobedience; ſince this ſingle puniſhment, of which the mercy of the law was careful to avoid repetition, might be extended to reſidence for life in a dungeon. Such was evidently the intention of the Baron du F——; and though his ſon, diſappointing this intention, had eſcaped with only three years of captivity, and ſome broken limbs, the benignant law above-mentioned interpoſed to prevent farther puniſhment, and left the Baron without any legal right to deprive Monſ. du F—— of his inheritance. His brothers, being ſenſible of this, wrote to inform him of his father's death, and recall him to France. He refuſed to go while the *lettre-de-cachet* remained in force againſt him.

him. The Baron having left all his papers ſealed up, which his younger ſons could not open but in the preſence of their brother, they obtained a revocation of the *lettre-de-cachet*, and ſent it to Monſ. du F——, who immediately ſet off for France.

The Baron's eſtate amounted to about four thouſand pounds a year. Willing to avoid a tedious litigation with his brothers, Monſ. du F—— conſented to divide with them this property. But he ſoon found reaſon to repent of his imprudent generoſity; thoſe very brothers, on whom he had beſtowed an equal ſhare of his fortune, refuſing to concur with him in his application to the Parliament of Rouen for the revocation of the *arrêt* againſt his marriage. Monſ. du F——, ſurpriſed and ſhocked at their refuſal, began to entertain ſome apprehenſions of his perſonal ſafety; and dreading that, ſupported by the authority of his mother, another *lettre-de-cachet* might be obtained

obtained againſt him, he haſtened back to England. Nor was it till after he had received aſſurances from ſeveral of the magiſtrates of Rouen, that they would be reſponſible for the ſafety of his perſon, that he again ventured to return to France, accompanied by Madame, and Mademoiſelle du F——, in order to obtain the revocation of the *arrêt*. On their arrival at Rouen, finding that the Parliament was exiled, and that the buſineſs could not be proſecuted at that time, they again came back to paſs the winter in England.

In the following ſummer Monſ. and Madame du F—— arrived in France, at the great epocha of French liberty, on the 15th of July, 1789, the very day after that on which the Baſtille was taken. It was then that Monſ. du F—— felt himſelf in ſecurity on his native ſhore.—It was then that his domeſtic comforts were no longer embittered, with the dread of being torn from his family

family by a ſeparation more terrible than death itſelf.—It was then that he no more feared that his repoſe at night would be broken by the entrance of ruffians prepared to drag him to dungeons, the darkneſs of which was never viſited by the bleſſed beams of day!

He immediately took poſſeſſion of his *château*, and only waits for the appointment of the new Judges, to ſolicit the revocation of the *arrêt* againſt his marriage, and to ſecure the inheritance of his eſtate to Mademoiſelle du F——, his only daughter, who is now fifteen years of age, and is that very child who was born in the boſom of adverſity, and whoſe infancy was expoſed to all the miſeries of want. May ſhe never know the afflictions of her parents, but may ſhe inherit their virtues!

Under the ancient government of France, there might have been ſome doubt of Monſ. du P——'s obtaining the

the revocation of the *arrêt* againſt his marriage. Beneath the iron hand of Deſpotiſm, juſtice and virtue might have been overthrown. But happier omens belong to the new conſtitution of France. The Judges will commence their high office with that dignity becoming ſo important a truſt, by cancelling an act of the moſt flagrant oppreſſion. They will confirm that ſolemn, that ſacred engagement which Monſ. and Madame du F—— have three times vowed at the altar of God!—which has been ſanctioned by laws human and divine—which has been ratified in earth and in heaven!

No ſooner had Monſ. and Madame du F—— taken poſſeſſion of their property, than they ſeemed eager to convince us, how little this change of fortune was capable of obliterating, for one moment, the remembrance of the friends of their adverſity. With all the earneſtneſs of affection, they invited us to France, and

appeared

appeared to think their proſperity incomplete, and their happineſs imperfect, till we accepted the invitation. You will believe that we are not inſenſible witneſſes of the delightful change in their fortune. We have the joy of ſeeing them, not only poſſeſſing all the comforts of affluence, but univerſal reſpect and eſteem.

Monſ. du F—— endeavours to baniſh miſery from his poſſeſſions. His tenants conſider him as a father, and "when the eye ſees him, it bleſſes him." I ſaid to one of the peaſants whom I met in my walk yeſterday, *"Je ſuis charmée de voir que Monſieur eſt ſi bien aimé ici."—Oh, pour ça, oui, Madame! & à bonne raiſon, car il ne nous fait que du bien!"

Such is the hiſtory of Monſ. du F——.

Has

*I am happy to ſee that Monſieur is ſo much beloved.—Oh, yes, Madam! and well he may; he does us nothing but good.

Has it not the air of romance? and are you not glad that the *dénouement* is happy?—Does not the old Baron die exactly in the right place; at the very page one would chooſe? Or, if I ſometimes wiſh that he had lived a little longer, it is only from that deſire of retribution, which, in caſes of injuſtice and oppreſſion, it is ſo natural to feel. —It is only becauſe the knowledge of the overthrow of the ancient government would have been a ſufficient puniſhment to him for all his cruelty: he would have ſickened at the ſight of general happineſs: the idea of liberty being extended to the lower ranks, while, at the ſame time, tyranny was deprived of its privileges, he would have found inſupportable; and would have abhorred a country which could no longer boaſt of a Baſtille; a country where iron cages were broken down, where dungeons were thrown open, and where

juſtice was henceforth to ſhed a clear and ſteady light, without one dark ſhade of relief from *lettres-de-cachet*.

But peace be to his aſhes! If the recollection of his evil deeds excites my indignation, it is far otherwiſe with Monſ. and Madame du F——. Never did I hear their lips utter an expreſſion of reſentment or diſreſpect towards his memory; and never did I, with that warmth which belongs to my friendſhip for them, involuntarily paſs a cenſure on his conduct, without being made ſenſible, by their behaviour, that I had done wrong.

Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

I AM glad you think that a friend's having been perſecuted, impriſoned, maimed, and almoſt murdered, under the ancient government of France, is a good excuſe for loving the revolution. What, indeed, but friendſhip, could have led my attention from the annals of imagination to the records of politics; from the poetry to the proſe of human life? In vain might Ariſtocrates have explained to me the rights of kings, and Democrates have deſcanted on the rights of the people. How many fine-ſpun threads of reaſoning would my wandering thoughts have broken; and how difficult ſhould I have found it to arrange arguments and inferences in the cells of my brain! But, however dull the faculties of my head, I can aſ-

ſure you, that when a propoſition is addreſſed to my heart, I have ſome quickneſs of perception. I can then decide, in one moment, points upon which philoſophers and legiſlators have differed in all ages: nor could I be more convinced of the truth of any demonſtration in Euclid, than I am, that, that ſyſtem of politics muſt be the beſt, by which thoſe I love are made happy.

Monſ. du F——'s *château* is near the little town of Forges, celebrated for its mineral waters, and much reſorted to in ſummer on that account. We went to the fountain, on pretence of drinking the waters, but in reality to ſee the company. The firſt morning we made our appearance, the ladies preſented us with noſegays of fine ſpreading purple heath, which they called **Bouquets à la fontaine.*

I was told, before I left England, that

* Noſegays of the fountain.

that I ſhould find that French liberty had deſtroyed French urbanity: but every thing I have ſeen and heard, ſince my arrival in France, has contradicted this aſſertion, and led me to believe that the French will carefully preſerve, from the wreck of their monarchical government, the old charter they have ſo long held of ſuperiority in politeneſs. I am perſuaded the moſt determined Democrates of the nation, whatever other privileges they may chooſe to exerciſe, will always ſuffer the privilege of being rude to lie dormant.

In every country it is ſocial pleaſure that ſheds the moſt delicious flowers which grow on the path of life; but in France ſhe covers the whole way with roſes, and the traveller can ſcarcely mark its ruggedneſs. Happy are a people, ſo fond of talking as the French, in poſſeſſing a language modelled to all the charming purpoſes of converſation.

Their turn of expreſſion is a dreſs that hangs ſo gracefully on gay ideas, that you are apt to ſuppoſe that wit, a quality parſimoniouſly diſtributed in other countries, is in France as common as the gift of ſpeech. Perhaps that brilliant phraſeology which dazzles a foreigner, may be familiar and common to a French ear: but how much ingenuity muſt we allow to a people who have formed a language, of which the common-place phraſes give you the idea of wit!

You, who are a reader of Madame Brulart's works, will know, that I am here on a ſort of claſſic ground. The Abbaye de Bobec is but a few miles diſtant from this *château*, and I walk every day in the foreſt where Michel and Jaqueline erected their little hut; which, you may remember, having unfortunately built too low to admit of their ſtanding upright, they comforted themſelves

themſelves with the reflection, *" Qu'on ne peut pas penſer à tout;" and when they were once ſeated in their dwelling, in which it was a vain attempt to ſtand, expatiated on the comforts of being †" chez ſoi." Upon inquiry, I have heard that poor Jaqueline, three years after the happy change in her fortune, was killed by a ſtroke of lightning, and that Michel (as he was bound to do, being the hero of a romance) died of grief.

The Abbé de Bobec has much reputation in this part of the country for wiſdom; but a French gentleman, who dined with him yeſterday, told me this morning, ‡" Il ma donné une indigeſtion de bon ſens." This is ſomething in the ſtyle of a young Frenchman, who went to viſit an acquaintance of his at Rotterdam, and has ever ſince called

* One cannot think of every thing.

† At home.

‡ He gave me an indigeſtion of good ſenſe.

that worthy gentleman, *" La raiſon continue (comme on dit la fièvre continue) avec des redoublemens."

An alarm has been ſpread, but without any foundation, that the Auſtrian troops were marching to invade France. It puts me in mind of the old trick of the Roman patricians, who, whenever the plebeians grew refractory, called out, that the Equi and the Volſci were coming: the Equi and the Volſci, however, never came.

* Reaſoning continued, as you would ſpeak of a fever with freſh paroxyſms.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

WE have had a *fête* at the *château*, on the day of St. Auguſtin, who is Monſ. du F——'s patron; and, though Monſieur is become a Proteſtant, I hope he will always ſhew this mark of reſpect to his old friend St. Auguſtin. Indeed I am perſuaded that Luther and Calvin, if they had been of our party, would have reconciled their minds to theſe charming rites of ſuperſtition.

The ceremonies began with a diſcharge of fuſees; after which Mademoiſelle du F—— entered the ſaloon, where a great crowd were aſſembled, with a crown of flowers in her hand, and addreſſed her father in theſe words:—* "Mon très-cher, papa, pourrois-je

* "My deareſt papa, can I chooſe a more favour-
"able moment to wiſh you an agreeable *fete* than
"this,

profiter d'un moment plus favorable pour vous ſouhaiter une bonne fête, que celui où nos bons & *vrais amis* ſont ici raſſemblés, & s'uniſſent à moi pour célébrer cet heureux jour? C'eſt dans vos biens, cher papa, c'eſt dans votre château, que la Divine Providence nous réunit, pour chanter vos vertus, & ce courage héroïque qui vous a fait ſupporter tous vos *malheurs*. L'orage eſt paſſé; jouiſſez maintenant, cher papa, du

" this, when our beſt, our faithful friends are here " aſſembled, and join with me in celebrating this " happy day? It is in the midſt of your poſſeſſions, " my dear papa, it is in your *chateau*, that Divine " Providence has re-united us, to declare your vir- " tues, and the heroic fortitude with which you have " ſupported your misfortunes. The ſtorm is paſt, " and you can now, my dear papa, enjoy the happi- " neſs you ſo well deſerve, and the eſteem of every " amiable mind. May your child contribute to your " felicity! May the Supreme Being hear the prayers " which I addreſs to him for the preſervation of a " tender father, to whom I offer my duty, my gra- " titude, and the beſt affections of my heart!"

du bonheur que vous méritez ſi bien, de l'eſtime que vous vous êtes acquis dans tous les cœurs ſenſibles. Que votre chère enfant contribue à votre félicité; que l'Eternel daigne exaucer les vœux que je lui adreſſe pour la conſervation & le bonheur d'un tendre père, à qui j'offre mes hommages, ma reconnoiſſance, & les ſentimens d'un cœur qui vous eſt tout dévoué."

She then placed the crown of flowers upon his head, and he embraced her tenderly. A number of ladies advanced, preſented him with noſegays, and were embraced in their turn.

We had ſeen, while we were at Paris, a charming little piece performed at the Théâtre de Monſieur, called "La Fédération, ou La Famille Patriotique." Madame du F—— ſent for a copy of this piece, and it was now performed by the company aſſembled at the *château*. The tenants, with their wives and daughters,

formed the moſt conſiderable part of the audience; and I believe no play in ancient or modern times, was ever acted with more applauſe. My ſiſter took a part in the performance, which I declined doing, till I recollected that one of the principal characters was a ſtatue; upon which I conſented to perform *_le beau rôle de la ſtatue_. And, in the laſt ſcene, I, being the repreſentative of Liberty, appeared with all her uſual attributes, and guarding the conſecrated banners of the nation, which were placed on an altar, on which was inſcribed, in tranſparent letters, †"A la Liberté, 14 Juillet, 1789." One of the performers, pointing to the ſtatue, ſays, ‡"Chaque peuple a décoré cette idole

* The fine part of the ſtatue.

† To Liberty, July 14th, 1789.

‡ Every nation has decorated this idol with ſome peculiar attributes.—This cap has been long one of her moſt eloquent emblems.—Can we not add ſome others, which may, perhaps, become no leſs celebrated?

idole de quelques attributs qui lui ſont particuliers.—Ce bonnet ſur-tout eſt devenu un emblême éloquent.—Ne pourrions-nous pas en ajouter d'autres qui deviendront peut-être auſſi célébres?" He then unfolds a ſcarf of national ribband, which had been placed at the foot of the altar, and adds, *" Cette noble écharpe!—Ces couleurs ſi bien aſſorties ne ſont-elles pas dignes de figurer auſſi parmi les attributs de la Liberté?" The ſcarf was thrown over my ſhoulder, and the piece concluded with †" Le Carillon National:" after a grand chorus of ‡*ça ira*, the performers ranged themſelves in order, and *ça ira* was danced: *ça ira* hung on every lip, *ça ira* glowed on every countenance! Thus do the French,

* That noble ſcarf!—are not its auſpicious colours worthy of appearing amongſt the attributes of Liberty?

† The national bells.

‡ It will go on.

French, leſt they ſhould be tempted, by pleaſure, to forget one moment the cauſe of liberty, bind it to their remembrance in the hour of feſtivity; with fillets and ſcarfs of national ribband; connect it with the ſound of the viol and the harp, and appoint it not merely to regulate the great movements of government, but to mould the figure of the dance. When the cotillon was finiſhed, ſome beautiful fire-works were played off, and we then went to ſupper. *"Vous êtes bien placée, Monſieur," ſaid Madame du F—— to a young Frenchman, who was ſeated between my ſiſter and me at table. †"Madame," anſwered he, in a ſtyle truly French, "me voilà heureux pour la première fois, à vingt-trois ans."

After ſupper we returned to the ſaloon, where the gentlemen danced with the

* You are well placed, Sir.

† I am made happy, Madam, for the firſt time, at three and twenty years of age.

the peaſant girls, and the ladies with the peaſants. A more joyous ſcene, or a ſet of happier countenances, my eyes never beheld: When I recollected the former ſituation of my friends, the ſpectacle before me ſeemed an enchanting viſion: I could not forbear, the whole evening, comparing the paſt with the preſent; and, while I meant to be exceedingly merry, I felt that tears, which would not be ſuppreſſed, were guſhing from my eyes—but they were tears of luxury.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

A DECREE has paſſed in the National Aſſembly, inſtituting rewards for literary merit. The propoſal met with great oppoſition from one of the Members—I do not wiſh to remember his name, who ſaid the State ſtood in need of huſbandmen, not poets; as if the State would be encumbered by having both. This gentleman thinks, that, provided wheat and oats flouriſh, the culture of *mind* may be diſpenſed with; and that, if the ſpade and harrow are ſharpened, the quill of genius may be ſtripped of all its feathers. **Mais, vive l'Aſſemblée Nationale!* —they have determined never to aboliſh the *nobility* of the Muſes, or deprive the fine arts † *de leurs droits honorifiques.*

A-propos

* Long live the National Aſſembly.

† Of their honorary rights.

A-propos of poets.—The French have conquered many old prejudices, but their prejudice againſt Shakeſpeare ſtill exiſts. They well know, that though in England it is our policy, or our pleaſure, to have an oppoſition on every other ſubject, we have not one diſſenting voice about Shakeſpeare; and therefore they allow that he may, perhaps, deſerve to be the idol of the Britiſh nation, a ſort of houſehold god whom we delight to honour; but they have gods of their own to whom they pay homage, and have little idea that Shakeſpeare was not only the glory of England, but of human nature. It would be a hopeleſs attempt to convince them, that the genius of their boaſted Corneille has ſomething of the proud and affected greatneſs of Lewis the Fourteenth, while that of Shakeſpeare has more affinity to the noble dignified ſimplicity of Henry the Fourth. They repeat, till you are

weary

weary of the remark, that French tragedies are regular dramas, while Shakespeare's plays are monsters. This reminds me of Boileau's answer to an author who had brought him a play to read, of which Boileau disapproved. Sir, exclaimed the enraged author, I defy malice to say that my piece transgresses any one of the rules. "Why, Sir," replied Boileau, "it transgresses the first rule of all, that of keeping the reader awake."

The young gentleman who, as I mentioned to you, was confined at St. Yon, in the cell adjoining Monsr. du F——'s, and with whom he used to converse in whispers through a hole in the wall, is come to pay a visit at the *château*. This young man went very early into the army: but, at the age of twenty, his father being at St. Domingo, and his mother considering her son as a spy upon her conduct, which was such as

shrunk

ſhrunk from inſpection, obtained a *lettre-de-cachet* againſt him, and he was confined three years at St. Yon. He has told me, that, after the firſt year, he loſt all hope of ever regaining his liberty. A morbid melancholy ſeized his mind; he lay ſtretched on the ſame bed for two years, and ſometimes refuſed to taſte food for ſeveral days together. When his father, at his return from St. Domingo, came to liberate him, he was ſo feeble that he was unable to walk.

His father again left France, and the brother of this young man has ſuffered a fate even more ſevere than himſelf. At the age of fifteen, he was guilty of ſome indiſcretions, which incurred the reſentment of his unrelenting mother, and another *lettre-de-cachet* was obtained.—"Is there any cauſe in nature that makes theſe hard hearts?"—He was confined ten years, and only releaſed when all the priſons were thrown open,

by

by order of the National Aſſembly. But for this unhappy young man their mercy came too late—His reaſon was gone for ever! and he was led out of his priſon, at the age of five and twenty, a maniac. When the ſenſibility with which his brother relates theſe family misfortunes melts us into tears, we are told, * *que la triſteſſe eſt la maladie du charbon Anglois*, and will never be tolerated in France.

You will not be ſurpriſed to hear that Monſ. du F—— has, with great complacency, relinquiſhed his title; and that, being a *ci-devant* CAPTIVE, as well as a *ci-devant* BARON, he feels that the enjoyment of perſonal ſecurity, the ſweetneſs of domeſtic comfort, in ſhort, that the common rights of man are of more value than he ever found the rights of nobility in the ſolitude of his dungeon. He is ready to acknowledge,

* Melancholy is the diſeaſe of Engliſh coal-fires.

ledge, that confinement in a ſubterraneous cell, a fall from a height of fifty feet, and the fracture of his limbs, are things which even the title of Baron can ſcarcely counterbalance; and he therefore drinks a libation, every day after dinner, * *à la ſanté de l'Aſſemblée Nationale*, though they have deprived him of the ſoothing epithet of Monſeigneur. We, however, ſhall ſoon ceaſe to pledge him in this toaſt. The day of our departure draws near. We muſt leave the charming ſociety at the *château*—we muſt leave the peaſants dance under the ſhade of the old elms, while the ſetting ſun pours ſtreams of liquid gold through the foliage—we muſt leave † *le maître de violon, qui ſe ride en riant, avec ſa malheureuſe figure.*—All this muſt we leave!—To-morrow is the laſt

* To the health of the National Aſſembly.

† The player on the violin, who, with his miſerable figure, has become wrinked from laughing.

laſt day of our reſidence at the *château*. What a deſolate word is that monoſyllable of *laſt*—how ſad, how emphatical its meaning!—There is ſomething in it which gives the moſt indifferent things an intereſt in our affections.—I am ſure I could write a volume with this little word for my text; but I may as well explain myſelf in one line—I am ſorry to leave France!

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

London.

WE left France early in September, that we might avoid the equinoctial gales; but were ſo unfortunate as to meet, in our paſſage from Dieppe to Brighton, with a very violent ſtorm. We were two days and two nights at ſea, and beat four and twenty hours off the coaſt of Brighton; and it would be difficult for you, who have formed your calculations of time on dry land, to gueſs what is the length of four and twenty hours in a ſtorm at ſea. At laſt, with great difficulty, we landed on the beach, where we found ſeveral of our friends and acquaintance, who, ſuppoſing that we might be among the paſſengers, ſympathiſed with our danger, and were anxious for our preſervation.

Before the ſtorm became ſo ſerious as to

to exclude every idea but that of preparing to die with compoſure, I could not help being diverted with the comments on French cuſtoms, and French politics, which paſſed in the cabin. "Ah!" ſays one man to his companion, "one had need to go to France, to know how to like old England when one gets back again."—"For my part," rejoined another, "I've never been able to get drunk once the whole time I was in France—not a drop of porter to be had—and as for their victuals, they call a bit of meat of a pound and a half, a fine piece of roaſt beef."—"And pray," added he, turning to one of the ſailors, "What do you think of their National Aſſembly?" "Why," ſays the ſailor, "if I ben't miſtaken, the National Aſſembly has got ſome points from the wind."

I own it has ſurpriſed me not a little, ſince I came to London, to find that moſt of my acquaintance are of the ſame opinion

nion with the ſailor. Every viſitor brings me intelligence from France full of diſmay and horror. I hear of nothing but crimes, aſſaſſinations, torture, and death. I am told that every day witneſſes a conſpiracy; that every town is the ſcene of a maſſacre; that every ſtreet is blackened with a gallows, and every highway deluged with blood. I hear theſe things, and repeat to myſelf—Is this the picture of France? Are theſe the images of that univerſal joy which called tears into my eyes, and made my heart throb with ſympathy?—To me, the land which theſe mighty magicians have ſuddenly covered with darkneſs, where, waving their evil wand, they have reared the diſmal ſcaffold, have clotted the knife of the aſſaſſin with gore, have called forth the ſhriek of deſpair, and the agony of torture—to me, this land of deſolation appeared dreſſed in additional beauty beneath the genial ſmile of Liberty. The woods ſeemed to caſt a more refreſhing

ſhade, and the lawns to wear a brighter verdure, while the carols of freedom burſt from the cottage of the peaſant, and the voice of joy reſounded on the hill, and in the valley.

Muſt I be told, that my mind is perverted, that I am become dead to all ſenſations of ſympathy, becauſe I do not weep with thoſe who have loſt a part of their ſuperfluities, rather than rejoice that the oppreſſed are protected, that the wronged are redreſſed, that the captive is ſet at liberty, and that the poor have bread? Did the Univerſal Parent of the human race implant the feelings of pity in the heart, that they ſhould be confined to the artificial wants of vanity, the ideal deprivations of greatneſs; that they ſhould be fixed beneath the dome of the palace, or locked within the gate of the *château*; without extending one commiſerating ſigh to the wretched hamlet, as if its famiſhed inhabitants, though not ennobled by *man*, did not bear, at leaſt,

the enſigns of nobility ſtamped on our nature by God?

Muſt I hear the charming ſocieties, in which I found all the elegant graces of the moſt poliſhed manners, all the amiable urbanity of liberal and cultivated minds, compared with the moſt rude, ferocious, and barbarous levellers that ever exiſted? Really, ſome of my Engliſh acquaintance, whatever objections they may have to republican principles, do, in their diſcuſſions of French politics, adopt a moſt free and republican ſtyle of cenſure. Nothing can be more democratical than their mode of expreſſion, or diſplay a more levelling ſpirit than their unqualified contempt of *all* the leaders of the revolution.

It is not my intention to ſhiver lances, in every ſociety I enter, in the cauſe of the National Aſſembly. Yet I cannot help remarking, that, ſince the Aſſembly does not preſume to ſet itſelf up as an example to this country, we ſeem to

have very little right to be furiouſly angry, becauſe they think proper to try another ſyſtem of government themſelves. Why ſhould they not be ſuffered to make an experiment in politics? I have always been told, that the improvement of every ſcience depends upon experiment. But I now hear, that, inſtead of their new attempt to form the great machine of ſociety upon a ſimple principle of general amity, upon the FEDERATION of its members, they ought to have repaired the feudal wheels and ſprings, by which their anceſtors directed its movements. Yet, if mankind had always obſerved this retrograde motion, it would ſurely have led them to few acquiſitions in virtue, or in knowledge; and we might even have been worſhipping the idols of paganiſm at this moment. To forbid, under the pains and penalties of reproach, all attempts of the human mind to advance to greater perfection,

perfection, ſeems to be proſcribing every art and ſcience: and we cannot much wonder that the French, having received ſo ſmall a legacy of public happineſs from their forefathers, and being ſenſible of the poverty of their own patrimony, ſhould try new methods of tranſmitting a richer inheritance to their poſterity.

Perhaps the improvements which mankind may be capable of making in the art of politics, may have ſome reſemblance to thoſe they have made in the art of navigation. Perhaps our political plans may have hitherto been ſomewhat like thoſe ill-conſtructed miſſhapen veſſels, which, unfit to combat with the winds and waves, were only uſed by the ancients to convey the warriors of one country to deſpoil and ravage another neighbouring ſtate; only ſerved to produce an intercourſe of hoſtility, a communication of injury,

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an exchange of rapine and devaſtation. —But it may poſſibly be within the compaſs of human ability to form a ſyſtem of politics, which like a modern ſhip of diſcovery, built upon principles that defy the oppoſition of the tempeſtuous elements, (" and paſſions are the elements of life"—) inſtead of yielding to their fury makes them ſubſervient to its purpoſe, and ſailing ſublimely over the untracked ocean, unites thoſe together whom nature ſeemed for ever to have ſeparated, and throws a line of connexion acroſs the divided world.

One cauſe of the general diſlike in which the French revolution is held in this country, is the exaggerated ſtories which are carefully circulated by ſuch of the ariſtocrates as have taken refuge in England. They are not all, however, perſons of this deſcription. There is now a young gentleman in London,

London, nephew to the Biſhop de Sens, who has loſt his fortune, his rank, all his high expectations, and yet who has the generoſity to applaud the revolution, and the magnanimity to reconcile himſelf to perſonal calamities, from the conſideration of general good; and who is "faithful found" to his country, "among the faithleſs." I hope this amiable young Frenchman will live to witneſs, and to ſhare the honours, the proſperity, of that regenerated country; and I alſo hope that the National Aſſembly of France will anſwer the objections of its adverſaries in the manner moſt becoming its own dignity, by forming ſuch a conſtitution as will render the French nation virtuous, flouriſhing, and happy.

FINIS.